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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session and its contribution to sharing a gender perspective in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals

Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is a review of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals, as mandated in Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/15.

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In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 33/56 and 50/206 on the consolidation of reports, the present report is also submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9, which requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, on an annual basis, a report on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on the priority theme, and as an input to the 2010 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in compliance with Council agreed conclusions 2002/1 and General Assembly resolution 61/16.

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. "We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the following Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programmes".[1] The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.[1] The Platform for Action is the global policy framework for gender equality, women's human rights and the empowerment of women and girls. It builds on commitments made at the United Nations world conferences on women held in Mexico in 1975,[2] Copenhagen in 1980,[3] and Nairobi in 1985,[4] as well as other commitments made at the United Nations global conferences and summits in the 1990s.[5]

2. The General Assembly conducted a five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2000 at its twenty-third special session entitled: "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". The Assembly adopted a political declaration and an outcome document entitled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action".[6] Governments recommitted themselves to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and agreed on further actions and initiatives to advance the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at local, national, regional and global levels.

3. At its forty-ninth session in 2005, the Commission on the Status of Women carried out the 10-year review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Member States adopted a Declaration which reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session. While welcoming the progress made, the Member States stressed that challenges and obstacles to implementation remained and pledged to undertake further action to ensure their full and accelerated implementation.[7]

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[1] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] See *Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June to 2 July 1975* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1).

[3] See *Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14 to 30 July 1980* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3 and corrigendum).

[4] See *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15 to 26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10).

[5] These included the World Summit for Children (1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the World Summit for Social Development (1995).

[6] See General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex.

[7] See E/2005/27.

B. Fifteen-year review to be carried out in the Commission on the Status of Women

4. In resolution 2006/9, the Economic and Social Council decided that the Commission on the Status of Women, at its fifty-third session, would discuss the possibility of conducting, in 2010, a review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. At its fifty-third session, the Commission decided to carry out a 15-year review at its fifty-fourth session, emphasizing the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those relating to the Millennium Development Goals.[8] The Economic and Social Council further decided that the Commission will review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.[9]

5. The 15-year review in the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place from 1 to 13 March 2010. The review will provide an opportunity for Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The review will focus on national level implementation. A number of interactive events with high-level representation will facilitate exchange of national experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

6. The General Assembly will hold a commemorative meeting to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action while the fifty-fourth session of the Commission is in session.[10]

7. The present report responds to the mandates outlined and provides a review of national level implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. It utilizes the responses to a questionnaire provided by the United Nations regional commissions to all Member States and observer States in their respective regions at the end of 2008.[11] By 30 November 2009, 139 Member States and one observer State had responded to the questionnaire. An overview of responses received, by region, is available as an annex to the present report (see annex).

8. The present report will be presented to the Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review in 2010, which will focus on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women". The outcome of the review in the Commission will also feed into the Economic and Social Council 2010 Annual Ministerial Review.

9. The outcome of the review in the Commission on the Status of Women, particularly through its focus on the linkages between the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,

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[8] See Commission on the Status of Women resolution 53/1.

[9] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/15.

[10] See A/C.3/64/L.3.

[11] See the questionnaire and the links to the responses on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15).

will provide a contribution to the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals to be held by the General Assembly in September 2010.[12]

C. Regional review processes

10. Prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, regional action plans were adopted by Member States.[13] In the context of the 5- and 10-year reviews of implementation of the Platform for Action in 2000 and 2005, regional review and appraisal processes were also undertaken.[14]

11. In preparation for the 15-year review at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, all five United Nations regional commissions undertook review processes and prepared regional reports. These reports will be made available at the Commission.[15] Four regional commissions also organized intergovernmental regional meetings. The outcomes of these regional meetings will be made available at the Commission. Non-governmental organizations held meetings in the regions in conjunction with those organized by the regional commissions. Non-governmental organizations also participated actively in the regional intergovernmental meetings.

12. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia hosted the fourth session of the Committee on Women, from 21 to 23 October 2009, in Beirut. The conference adopted the resolution entitled Follow-up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Beijing+15. The Economic Commission for Europe held its regional preparatory meeting: Beijing+15 Regional Review Meeting, from 2 to 3 November 2009 in Geneva. The outcome of the meeting was a Chairperson's Summary. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific hosted the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its Regional and Global Outcomes from 16 to 18 November 2009, in Bangkok. The meeting adopted the Bangkok Declaration for Beijing+15. The Economic Commission for Africa undertook its review from 16 to 20 November 2009 in Gambia, during the Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+15). The meeting adopted the Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for the Acceleration of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action as its outcome document. The regional meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will take place at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Brasilia from 13 to 16 July 2010.

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[12] See General Assembly resolution 63/302.

[13] See the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific (June 1994); the regional Platform for Action: Women in a Changing World: Call for Action from an ECE Perspective (October 1994); the Arab Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2005 (November 1994); the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 (November 1994); and the African Platform for Action (November 1994).

[14] See E/CN.6/2005/2.

[15] See the links to the regional reports on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/regional_review.html#rep.

II. Review of implementation of the critical areas of concern

13. The following section provides an overview of the major global policy developments, trends in implementation at the national level and remaining gaps and challenges in relation to each of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action.

A. Women and poverty

1. Introduction

14. The Platform for Action noted that poverty had various manifestations, including, inter alia, lack of income and productive resources, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited/lack of access to education and other basic services, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, and social discrimination and exclusion. The Platform emphasized that poverty eradication strategies should be comprehensive and that the application of gender analysis to a wide range of economic and social policies and programmes was critical to the elaboration and successful implementation of poverty reduction strategies. At its twenty-third special session, the General Assembly noted that policies and programmes should be formulated to achieve the goal of people-centred sustainable development, and secure livelihoods and adequate social protection measures, including safety nets, strengthened support systems for families, and equal access to and control over financial and economic resources, and to eliminate increasing and disproportionate poverty among women.[16]

15. At the 2005 World Summit, global leaders reaffirmed their commitment to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all, and resolved to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination by, inter alia, guaranteeing the free and equal right of women to own and inherit property and ensuring secure tenure of property and housing for women; promoting women's equal access to labour markets, sustainable employment and adequate labour protection; and ensuring equal access of women to productive assets and resources, including land, credit and technology.[17] In the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development (2008), Heads of State and Government and High Representatives recalled that gender equality was a basic human right, a fundamental value and an issue of social justice, and essential for economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and development effectiveness.[18]

16. In the agreed conclusions on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, adopted in 2008, the Commission on the Status of Women noted the growing body of evidence that demonstrated that investing in women and girls had a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth, and that increasing women's economic empowerment was central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the eradication of poverty.[19] The Commission urged Governments to design and strengthen poverty

[16] See General Assembly resolution S-23/3.
[17] See General Assembly resolution 60/1.
[18] See General Assembly resolution 63/239.
[19] See E/2008/27, chap. I, sect. A.

eradication strategies, with the full and effective participation of women, that enhance the capacity of women and empower them to meet the negative social and economic impacts of globalization.[19]

2. Trends in national-level implementation

17. With the target date of the Millennium Development Goals fast approaching, there is increased attention to the goal of eradicating extreme poverty. Based on the most recent available data, significant progress has been made in reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty in the developing regions, estimated to be slightly more than a quarter of the population in these regions in 2005, compared to almost half in 1990.[20] Progress, however, has been uneven across regions and within countries. While poverty in eastern Asia, for example, declined from 39 per cent in 1995 to 19 per cent in 2005, poverty levels in sub-Saharan Africa were only reduced from 57 per cent to 51 per cent over the same period. The current global financial and economic crisis threatens to reverse some of the progress made in poverty reduction. The crisis is expected to result in between 73 million and 103 million more people remaining poor or falling into poverty compared to pre-crisis estimates.[21]

18. Responses from some countries suggested that women were more likely than men to be living in poverty and that certain groups of women were particularly vulnerable to poverty. These included women farmers, women working in the informal sector, migrants, women with disabilities and older women. In some countries, women's vulnerability to poverty was attributed to single parenthood. A higher proportion of female-headed households compared to male-headed households was living in poverty.

19. Lack of legal provisions guaranteeing the economic rights of women, coupled with customary laws that discriminate against women with regard to inheritance, land, property and credit, hinder women's economic empowerment and their ability to move out of poverty.[22] Other factors leading to poverty among women include women's limited access to and control over resources, resulting from, inter alia, gender wage gaps, horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, unemployment and inadequate pensions. Some countries emphasized the negative impact of women's low participation in economic decision-making on the allocation and distribution of economic and financial resources.

20. States have taken a range of actions to address this critical area of concern. Four major trends have emerged: (a) addressing the needs and priorities of poor women in policy development and research; (b) increased focus on social protection measures to address poverty among women; (c) increasing women's access to land, property and other productive resources; and (d) increasing women's access to financial services.

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[20] See *Millennium Development Goals Report 2009* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.I.12).

[21] See *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009: update as of mid-2009* (United Nations, New York, 2009) (see www.un.org/esa/policy/wess).

[22] See *Innovative Approaches to Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 08.III.B.23) (United Nations Development Programme, 2008).

Addressing the needs and priorities of poor women in policy development and research

21. There is increasing recognition that women's economic empowerment is a key strategy for economic development that not only improves the economic status of women, their households and communities, but also creates a multiplier effect for economic growth. The lack of economic empowerment for women jeopardizes growth and poverty reduction and leads to less favourable development outcomes.

22. For many developing countries, poverty reduction has been a national priority. Member States took steps to mainstream gender perspectives in existing national poverty reduction and development strategies. National mechanisms for gender equality were increasingly involved in the development of such strategies. Efforts were made to incorporate gender perspectives into the development and the implementation of both macro- and microeconomic policies. To raise awareness of the gender dimensions of poverty, consultations with key stakeholders on poverty reduction strategies were organized, as well as training activities on gender equality and gender analysis targeted at key policy decision makers and programme implementers.

23. Research on the gender aspects of poverty has increased, including on the situation of women in export-processing zones, women entrepreneurs and women agricultural producers. Women's and men's differential access to social security benefits and the unequal sharing of unpaid work, including caregiving, has also been investigated. Research has contributed to the design and evaluation of public policies and social programmes that promote gender equality and acknowledge the contributions made by women to economic and social well-being.

Increased focus on social protection measures to address poverty among women

24. Responses from Member States reflected their increased recognition of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon, which not only includes income poverty but also deprivation in relation to education, health, and voice and power, as well as acknowledgement of the need to address gender inequalities that lead to women's social exclusion and economic subordination. Social protection measures have become more important within the context of the current multiple crises in preventing and mitigating risks throughout the life cycle and reducing vulnerability to poverty among women. Many countries, for example, took measures to alleviate poverty among women, including women with disabilities and older women, within the framework of social protection and social inclusion strategies.

25. Safety nets to protect women and children from poverty were established in Latin America, the Asia Pacific Region and Europe through income support, conditional cash transfers for short-term assistance to families, and provision of childcare, especially for single mothers. Allowances in cash and in kind successfully increased poor households' access to health care, nutrition and education. Assistance programmes also provided training in areas such as health, prevention of and response to domestic violence, community organization and productive activities. Vouchers for health and education, offering access to health care, nutrition, and education for households living in poverty were successful in lowering school dropout rates, in particular for girls. Women were trained to administer health and education vouchers provided by the Government to the household for the purchase of health and education services. Positive outcomes included children's well-being,

through, for example, better nutrition, hygiene practices and school attendance. In some cases, such interventions influenced the relationships between women and men in households leading to men's increased involvement in unpaid work, including caregiving for children.

26. As a result of the food crisis, poor people, especially women and girls, are likely to consume smaller amounts or lower quality foods, resulting in increased malnutrition. In a number of countries, comprehensive nutritional policies and programmes have been introduced to improve the nutrition of the poor, with a particular focus on women and those living in rural areas. Programmes, for example, provided basic commodities, such as milk fortified with vitamins and minerals. Cash allowances were provided to the poorest households in some countries to offset their reduced purchasing power caused by the increases in food prices.

27. Efforts to reduce poverty among women by facilitating their increased participation in paid work included provision of childcare allowances and expansion of facilities for the care of children and older persons. HIV/AIDS increases the vulnerability of women to poverty, in particular older women who often assume responsibility for children orphaned by AIDS. In response to this situation, grants for children and older persons have been provided to support and alleviate care burdens.

28. Measures were taken to ensure women's equal access to old-age pensions and early retirement schemes. Basic non-contributory pensions play a critical role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment by reducing inequalities in income between older women and men. Gender-sensitive pension reforms have taken into account the intermittent nature of women's work due to interruptions for care of children. Campaigns were conducted to raise awareness among older women of their pension entitlements. A number of Governments reported on social protection measures that were not specifically targeted at women, but were expected to reduce women's vulnerability to poverty. Such initiatives included laws increasing the minimum wage, the provision of social transfers, reducing the age requirement for beneficiaries of survival pensions, and establishing minimum income for pensioners.

Increasing women's access to land, property and other productive resources

29. Women's access to land, property and other productive resources increases their access to credit and impacts on productivity. While many earlier land reform processes, such as land-titling and resettlement schemes, targeted male household heads, many recent measures have focused on ensuring more gender-sensitive processes. A number of countries sought to improve women's access to productive resources by introducing gender-sensitive legislation recognizing women's equal right to land ownership, including through joint certification of land and provision for spousal consent on matters relating to land ownership. As a result, an increase in women's ownership of registered land was reported. Affirmative measures, for example, were taken to facilitate the issuance of property titles to women living in rural areas and to indigenous women. Women's groups and networks have been instrumental in promoting land and property rights for women through advocacy and training activities.

30. Access to adequate housing has been recognized as critical for poverty reduction and increased attention is given to ensuring that women have equal rights

to housing, including through the promotion of joint titling, the provision of infrastructure and training. A few countries reported taking measures to ensure that women benefit equally from housing development.

31. In many countries, access to resources, such as water, energy, and the technology and services necessary to effectively utilize these resources, reduces women's workloads, releases time for income-generating and community activities, increases productivity and contributes to sustainable livelihoods and the eradication of poverty. Efforts have continued to increase access to potable water and sanitation and improve access to reliable and affordable energy supplies. A positive development reported was the increasing role women play in the use and management of resources, through, for example, greater participation in decision-making in local organizations that manage and control water resources at the community level.

Increasing women's access to financial services

32. Women need access to all financial services, including savings, insurance, remittance transfers and credit, to fully benefit from economic opportunities. Access to formal financial services for women remained, however, very inadequate in most regions. Women generally receive less credit and in smaller amounts than men. The provision of microcredit continued to be a common response to women's lack of access to formal financial services. Microcredit remained an important poverty reduction strategy and a critical tool for women's economic empowerment. In 2007, microfinance organizations reached 154.8 million clients, of whom 106.6 million were among the poorest when they took their first loan. Women made up 83.4 per cent of the latter group.[23] While microfinance has reached large numbers of women, it has often both failed to reach the poorest of women and to meet the needs of successful women entrepreneurs wanting to expand their businesses.

33. Group-based microcredit schemes continued, however, to contribute to women's economic empowerment by providing the funds required for small and medium-level women entrepreneurs as well as opportunities to develop organizational, marketing and financial skills. Microfinance organizations also played an important role in promoting labour-saving technologies to reduce the workloads of poor women. Measures to increase the access of poor women to credit have been taken by both public and private sector organizations and included simplification of procedures for access to savings and credit institutions, provision of financial resources to women entrepreneurs, and loans to women farmers through farmers associations. Other initiatives included collaboration between national machineries for gender equality and the private sector to increase women's access to microfinance and establishment of microfinance schemes for women's cooperative groups for enterprise development at the grass-roots level.

3. Gaps and challenges

34. Challenges to the full and effective implementation of gender-sensitive poverty reduction strategies include resource constraints, unequal access to employment for women, illiteracy among women, and women's limited access to

[23] See S. Daley-Harris (2009), *State of Microcredit Summit Campaign Report, 2009* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

markets. These challenges reflect the multidimensional aspects of poverty and the need for a comprehensive multisectoral approach in addressing poverty among women. While these challenges varied across countries and regions, some Governments reported that they were exacerbated as a result of the financial and economic crisis, as well as the food and fuel crises.

35. Some countries reported on efforts to reduce poverty in general, without providing any specific details on efforts to address the gender dimensions of poverty. Such measures included financial support to households, increase in social benefits, the provision of health services and education, short-term debt suspension programmes for farmers, and development funds to communities. It is important to systematically monitor the effectiveness of these general measures in promoting gender-sensitive poverty reduction and their gender-specific impacts.

36. While gender equality objectives on poverty eradication are increasingly addressed at the policy level, significant gaps persist in their implementation at the programme level. There is a need for increased systematic monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of efforts to make poverty reduction strategies more gender-sensitive and for assessing their impact on poverty among women.

37. Lack of sex-disaggregated data on women's poverty continues to be a major obstacle for designing gender-sensitive poverty reduction strategies and measuring the impact of such strategies. The need for improved data on women's ownership of land in particular was highlighted.

38. While legislative reforms have been undertaken to ensure women's equal rights and access to land, there is limited information on the progress made in the implementation of such reforms. Discriminatory inheritance practices in rural areas were reported to be a major obstacle to the implementation of laws that guarantee women's equal rights to inheritance to land. Population growth, climate change, the spread of markets and urbanization have also created challenges in women's access to land, housing and other productive resources.

39. Women, especially poor women, need access not only to microcredit but also to a broader range of formal financial services, including savings, insurance, money transfers and advisory services. Targeted microfinance interventions are needed to reach women in extreme poverty, in particular women in rural and remote areas. Despite the evidence that microcredit can help reduce poverty among women, and the fact that women constitute the majority of the poorest clients of microcredit institutions, women continued to face challenges in accessing credit and usually received smaller amounts than those allocated to men. The lending policies of financial institutions, including rigorous requirements and guarantees for loans, limited women's access to credit.

40. The tendency to cut public spending during times of financial and economic crisis can have an adverse effect on social services. In particular, health and education services are critical for poor women. The food crisis, which led to increases in food prices, exacerbated the challenges poor women face. Poor women are particularly impacted by the food crisis as food crop producers, but also as consumers since they allocate a large share of their incomes to food.

41. Development cooperation remains critical for the eradication of poverty, especially among women and children. Although a number of donor countries gave particular importance to addressing poverty among women within the framework of

their international development cooperation, funding has been mainly directed at the social sectors, mainly health and education, with limited funds allocated to areas such as agriculture, infrastructure or finance.

B. Education and training

1. Introduction

42. The Platform for Action called on Governments to eliminate disparities between women and men in access to education and educational outcomes at all levels and in all forms of education, including primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, adult literacy and lifelong learning, in line with the outcome of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All.

43. The Education for All framework and Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 focused considerable attention on girls' education. The target date of 2005 for eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education in goal 3 reflected widespread agreement about the urgency of addressing the gender gap in education for the achievement of all Goals. There is a large body of evidence on the benefits of educating women and girls, including the links to improving productivity, lowering infant and maternal mortality, improving nutrition and health, and countering the spread of HIV/AIDS.[24] This target was, however, not met.

44. The Commission on the Status of Women continued to address critical aspects of women's and girls' education and training in its deliberations and outcomes. Several of its recent agreed conclusions contain key provisions aimed at eliminating gender disparities and promoting gender-sensitive education and training, including its agreed conclusions of 2007 on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.[25]

2. Trends in national-level implementation

45. Access to education increased globally for girls at all levels, particularly in primary education. Girls gained both greater access (intake) to and participation (enrolment) in primary education. The ratio of girl to boy first-graders increased globally from 92 girls per 100 boys in 1999 to 95 girls per 100 boys in 2006, and nearly two thirds of the 187 countries for which data was available had achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment by 2006.[26]

46. Globally, the survival rate to the last grade of primary education was nearly the same for girls and boys, at 89 per cent for girls and 88 per cent for boys in 2005. Over half of countries with data had achieved gender parity in school retention, and in two thirds of the countries where disparities remained, girls were more likely than boys to complete primary education.[26]

47. There were 95 girls per 100 boys enrolled in secondary education in 2006, compared to 92 girls in 1999. However, global-level data hides differences between

[24] See United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, *Gender Achievements and Prospects in Education: The GAP Report Part One* (United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 2005).

[25] See E/2007/27, chap. I.A.

[26] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009: Overcoming inequality: why governance matters* (UNESCO, Paris, 2008).

and within regions and countries. Worldwide there were about as many countries with more girls enrolled in secondary school as countries with more boys enrolled.[26]

48. There has also been significant progress in women's access to tertiary education in several countries. While in 1999 there were 96 women per 100 men enrolled in higher education institutions globally, by 2006 women outnumbered men, bringing the proportion to 106 women per 100 men. However, wide disparities among regions remain. While in developed and transition countries, in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, and increasingly in the Middle East region, women tend to outnumber men, they continue to lag behind men in many other parts of the world, including in sub-Saharan Africa.[26]

49. States have undertaken a wide range of actions to implement the strategic objectives on education and training at the national level, with substantial gains for women and girls particularly in relation to access, as evidenced by Education for All and Millennium Development Goals monitoring data. Five main trends have been identified: (a) continued priority attention to education in national policies; (b) continued development of strategies and actions to increase access to formal education; (c) growing momentum to promote non-discriminatory education; (d) greater efforts to address gender disparities in fields of study; and (e) sustained attention to non-formal education and training.

Continued priority attention to education in national policies

50. Education and training remain a priority for most countries, as demonstrated by the inclusion of education as a key area in national development strategies, and in gender equality policies and action plans, as well as by the development of targeted policies and measures on girls' education.

51. Increasingly, measures are taken to mainstream gender perspectives in the education sector. The capacity to undertake gender-sensitive policy development and programming has, for example, been strengthened through the increased involvement of gender equality experts, and the establishment of gender units or focal points in ministries of education and, in some cases, in schools and universities. Some Governments made it mandatory for schools and universities to develop gender equality or equal opportunities plans; and some also made efforts to monitor implementation of such initiatives. Trained inspectors, for example, evaluated school performance in promoting gender equality, and schools were requested to monitor that girls benefit equally from resources. Tools, such as gender mainstreaming manuals, have also been developed.

52. Available data show that national spending on education varies widely, both in terms of total funding and focus. Public spending on education as a share of gross national product (GNP) increased in the majority of 105 countries with data between 1999 and 2006, but decreased in 40 countries. In 2006, the share of GNP spent on education ranged from 1.2 per cent to 10.8 per cent globally.[26] While little data exists on national education spending directly benefiting girls, it is encouraging that some States initiated gender-responsive budgeting in the education sector.

53. Within the framework of international cooperation, education, including girls' education, has remained a priority. Except for a decline in 2005, the share of official development assistance to education remained constant, at around 9 per cent, between 2000 and 2007.[26]

Continued development of strategies and actions to increase access to formal education

54. A variety of strategies and actions contributed to improve girls' participation in primary, secondary and tertiary education, including action to make education compulsory and free. By 2005, 95 per cent of 203 countries and territories had passed compulsory education laws.[27] The trend towards abolishing or reducing school fees at the primary and/or secondary level continued, either as a policy applying to all children or as a targeted measure for girls, including girls from low-income families and rural areas. To cater for a growing student population, a number of Governments built, expanded or renovated schools, particularly in rural areas. Some constructed separate latrines to improve girls' access and attendance.

55. Financial and in kind assistance helped bolster girls' enrolment and ensure that they remained in school. Scholarships provided incentives for families to educate girls. Rewarding girls' academic performance also motivated girls. The establishment of school canteens and the provision of take-home food rations made it more feasible for poor families to send girls to school. Free textbooks, school materials and uniforms, in some cases for girls only, further relieved poor families of the costs associated with education. Governments also made accommodation in boarding schools or hostels available to students from isolated communities, or reserved a percentage of university housing for girls. Awareness-raising campaigns on the benefits of educating girls supplemented measures to lift financial barriers to education.

56. Early pregnancy continues to force some girls to drop out of school. States adopted specific laws or policies on education for school-age pregnant girls, including on re-entry in the school system after delivery. Practical measures included a system of justified class absence for pregnant girls, and the provision of guidance for pregnant girls and young mothers. Some countries provided financial assistance, such as scholarships or childcare support, to encourage secondary level students to continue their studies. More options for financial support tend to be available at the tertiary level, including early release of scholarship funds to pay for childcare and support for studying abroad with a child.

Growing momentum to promote non-discriminatory education

57. The prevalence of gender stereotypes continues to negatively affect the educational outcomes as well as the career choices of both young women and men. In recent years, there has been a move towards enhanced action to promote gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory education, including in vocational training and adult education.

58. The recognition of the role of curricula and textbooks in reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes led to increased focus on the content of education, including early childhood education. Some States adopted legislation mandating the integration of gender perspectives into curricula and teaching materials. A growing number of countries have reviewed and revised school curricula and educational materials to eliminate stereotypes, including in textbook images. In some cases,

[27] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for All by 2015: Will We Make It?* (UNESCO, Paris, 2008).

financial incentives, in the form of subsidies, were used to encourage schools to buy gender-sensitive textbooks.

59. Teachers' attitudes can also reinforce stereotypes and contribute to discriminatory education for both girls and boys. Many Governments put in place gender-sensitization workshops or training courses for education personnel, and developed handbooks for teachers, social workers and school psychologists. Some developed gender equality modules for teacher training institutes or universities to institutionalize such efforts.

60. Some measures also respond to an emerging concern that in some countries boys underachieve compared to girls, including in terms of dropout, repetition, and enrolment in higher education. These included motivational sessions for boys and single-sex classrooms. However, when addressing this issue, it is important to ensure that concerns for boys do not lead to the dismantling of measures or reduction of resource allocations benefiting girls.

61. Some efforts centred on educating students about gender equality, including violence against women and girls, through new or existing courses in, for example, political and civic education, human rights education, and sex education. Governments also developed or supplied educational material on gender equality for schools. Special events, such as lectures, debates and competitions, sensitized students to gender equality issues.

62. Strengthening academic research on gender equality issues was another means utilized to address prevalent stereotypes. Universities created or expanded gender studies programmes and courses, including summer schools and workshops. In addition, financial incentives encouraged university teachers to include gender dimensions in their courses, and students to explore gender-related topics in their theses or research projects.

Greater efforts to address gender disparities in fields of study

63. Some progress, albeit slow, has been achieved in addressing gender disparities in the choice of education and training courses. While women globally remain underrepresented in science and technology, with a median share of 29 per cent of tertiary-level students in science and 16 per cent in engineering in 2006,[26] more women have entered these and other traditionally male-dominated fields of study in a number of countries. Similar progress is visible in vocational education. In some countries, women were reportedly increasingly interested in non-traditional fields such as carpentry, air-conditioning and refrigeration.

64. Efforts to reduce gender disparities in field of study often focused on disseminating information to women and girls and their parents on training opportunities and career choices, including through dedicated websites, seminars and events such as orientation days at universities. Special emphasis was placed on increasing the proportion of women in science and technology. Women role models, gender-sensitive teaching methods, mentoring for girls, and math and science camps helped challenge negative representations of scientific careers and address girls' lack of confidence in scientific fields.

65. Some States recognized the need to also broaden boys' training and career options, through, for example, initiating research and promoting non-traditional career choices for boys as well as girls through websites and career days.

Sustained attention to non-formal education and training

66. Programmes and institutions managed by public, private or non-profit organizations offer learning activities outside the realm of formal education. Many non-formal efforts focused on increasing women's access to vocational and skills training, and empowering specific groups of women, such as heads of households, poor, unemployed, migrant or formerly trafficked women. Education and training initiatives were also aimed at helping women to re-enter the labour market after childbirth and child-rearing. Other vocational training programmes targeted rural women, for example, with literacy courses and agro-technology training, and women entrepreneurs, with information and communications technology (ICT) education. Some Governments took measures to facilitate women's participation in training opportunities by, for example, adjusting the schedule and location of courses in consideration of family responsibilities, providing childcare support to learners, and developing women-only classes.

67. Measures to combat illiteracy, although still limited in scale, included setting concrete goals for reducing illiteracy, developing or expanding national adult education and literacy programmes, establishing special adult literacy centres and programmes for women, and linking literacy training with vocational training. In some countries, food support or canteens provided incentives for women to attend. A focus on gender equality and women's rights was included in some literacy programmes and teachers' training. In many parts of the world, civil society organizations continued to play an important role in providing literacy courses for women.

3. Gaps and challenges

68. Despite these encouraging trends, gains have been uneven and a number of gaps and challenges continue to prevent women and girls from exercising their right to education.

69. Illiteracy remains a key issue for women, who account for nearly two thirds of the 776 million illiterate adults in the world. It is particularly prevalent among women who are older, poor, disabled, from ethnic minorities or from rural areas. The sex ratio of illiterate adults has not changed over the last 20 years.[26] Increased resources and better coordinated literacy programmes are needed to ensure that women acquire basic reading and writing skills.

70. While there has been significant progress in girls' participation in formal education, disparities remain across regions. Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa, and Western Asia continue to display the widest gender gaps in primary enrolment to the disadvantage of girls.[20] In addition, out-of-school girls, who accounted for 55 per cent of the 75 million primary-age children not in school in 2006, were more likely than boys never to enrol.[26] In secondary education, girls' participation remains particularly low in sub-Saharan Africa and in Western and Southern Asia.[20]

71. Disparities in access continue to exist within countries. Girls who live in poverty, in rural areas or in urban slums, or who belong to a minority group, as well as girls with disabilities, are at a greater disadvantage than other girls. Since gender parity ratios provide no information on the percentage of girls and boys who attend school and complete their education, relative to the overall population of girls and boys of a country, they only give a partial measure of progress. It is important to

focus attention on the total number of girls who enrol in and complete education, as this figure remains low at the secondary and tertiary level in many parts of the world.

72. Global crises, such as the financial and economic crisis, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, armed conflict and natural disasters, pose serious challenges to the provision of education for all. Concerns have been raised that donor commitments to basic education are stagnating,[26] and lack of funding has been identified as an obstacle to scaling up the lessons learned from pilot projects. Experience from past crises suggests that cutbacks in public expenditures and decreases in household incomes lead to the withdrawal of girls from school. In addition, the burden of unpaid work, including increased demand for care work in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, continues to restrict women's and girls' education and training opportunities.

73. Negative attitudes and practices continue to restrict girls' access to and participation in education. In many countries, families may assign greater value to educating boys, and expect girls to attend to a number of domestic responsibilities, such as caring for siblings and relatives, or collecting water and firewood. In addition, early pregnancy and early marriage remain significant causes of school drop-out.

74. Both girls and boys remain influenced by traditional gender norms and stereotypes throughout the course of their studies. While efforts have been undertaken to reduce gender biases in curricula, textbooks and teacher attitudes, the scale of such measures varies greatly, and their impact remains insufficiently documented. More efforts are needed to address the persistence of gender stereotypes in education.

75. Lack of safety of girls on the way to and at school remains a significant concern. While efforts have been made to combat school violence, for example by setting up police alarm systems and sensitizing students and teachers, further action is needed to end bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault of girls by male students and teachers and the risk of attacks in travelling to and from school.

76. Employment in the education sector continues to be marked by occupational segregation, with women overrepresented at lower levels of education, and men at higher levels, including in decision-making positions.[26] This unequal access to better paid and higher-level positions has negative consequences for women. The lack of male and female role models at different levels of education has negative impacts on girls and boys. In some countries, there are limited numbers of women teachers even at lower levels of education, particularly in rural areas. The uneven sex ratio of teachers should be addressed at all levels of education.

77. Gender segregation in field of study remains widespread. Limited study choices of women and girls can lead to less promising career prospects and earnings. The trend to encourage girls and women to enter traditionally "male" fields has not been mirrored to the same extent by efforts to encourage male students to enter female-dominated sectors, such as care-related work. Concerted action, targeting both girls and boys, will be necessary to redress gender disparities in field of study and career choices.

78. The increased educational attainment of women and girls across the globe does not necessarily translate into improved employment opportunities. A range of

political, social and economic factors impact the school-to-work transition, and returns to primary, secondary and tertiary education differ between women and men. Owing to discrimination, women still face many challenges in employment, including occupational segregation, wage gaps and limited career development. Further efforts are required to ensure women's educational attainments are reflected in equal opportunities in the labour market.

C. Women and health

1. Introduction

79. Since the adoption of the Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, significant efforts have been made to secure women's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, throughout the life cycle. The inclusion, among the Millennium Development Goals, of a commitment to improve maternal health (goal 5), as well as health-related commitments to combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (goal 6) and reducing child mortality (goal 4), has given further impetus to these efforts.

80. At the 2005 World Summit on Social Development, Member States resolved to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination by, inter alia, ensuring equal access to reproductive health. In the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS,[28] Member States pledged to eliminate gender inequalities and increase the capacity of women to protect themselves from the risk of infection, principally through the provision of health care and services. The Commission on the Status of Women called for the creation of an enabling environment for women's health, including through mainstreaming gender perspectives in health-sector policies and programmes and the allocation of adequate resources.[29] In 2009, the Economic and Social Council stressed the importance of developing gender-sensitive multisectoral health policies and programmes.[30]

2. Trends in national-level implementation

81. Member States have undertaken a range of actions to implement the strategic objectives at the national level. Four main trends have emerged: (a) increased efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in health-related policy frameworks, and to expand targeted measures for women; (b) improving access to quality health services for women; (c) greater efforts to improve women's sexual and reproductive health; and (d) increased attention to women-specific non-communicable diseases.

Increased efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in health-related policy frameworks and to expand targeted measures for women

82. Gender-sensitive policy frameworks, together with targeted measures, provide a strong foundation for addressing women's health needs in a comprehensive manner, and many countries have worked to enhance their legislation, policies, strategies and action plans. There has been some progress in introducing, or further

[28] See General Assembly resolution 60/262.
[29] See E/2006/27 and E/2008/27.
[30] See A/64/3.

strengthening gender perspectives in public health systems. Some countries have strengthened legislation to ensure that women benefit equally from available health services, while others have undertaken legislative reform, for example, to include family planning and pre- and post-pregnancy care for women.

83. Policy frameworks were strengthened and action plans adopted on women's sexual and reproductive health in a number of countries. Some of these efforts specifically focused on achieving safe motherhood, improving maternal health and reducing maternal and child mortality. Strategies have been put in place to combat obstetric fistula caused by complications from pregnancy or childbirth. Steps have also been taken to raise awareness about the adverse effects of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Some countries have promoted the nutritional well-being of mothers, and enhanced awareness about the health benefits of breastfeeding.

84. HIV/AIDS-related policies, strategies and action plans have increasingly placed specific emphasis on prevention, treatment and care for women. HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention strategies include counselling and voluntary testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, male and female condom availability and use, and provision of antiretroviral therapy.

85. Action plans have been developed to address the increase in drug and alcohol abuse among women, with particular emphasis on prevention, counselling and therapy. A number of developed countries adopted action plans in response to the rowing concern about eating disorders among women, especially young women, which promoted women's and adolescents' physical activity and healthy eating.

86. Institutional mechanisms can play a critical role in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming in the health sector. Women's health councils, commissions or agencies have been established or strengthened to promote attention to women-specific health issues such as reproductive health, and maternal health and mortality, and to contribute to gender-sensitive policy development and implementation. Women's health observatories have been created to compile and disseminate information about women's health to the general public. Collaboration with universities has been initiated to promote research on women's health to inform health policy development.

87. Further progress has been made in strengthening capacity to develop gender-sensitive health policies. Countries are increasingly implementing training for staff, including gender focal points, in health ministries and agencies to enable them to better carry out their responsibilities for gender mainstreaming. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality have worked in collaboration with the ministries of health to provide training of staff, sometimes with the support of international organizations. Some countries reported on the development of tools, such as guidelines and manuals on gender mainstreaming as well as gender analysis, used in the training.

88. To ensure that adequate funds are allocated for the health needs of both women and men, health budgets have been examined from a gender equality perspective. Resources have been earmarked or increased in a number of areas, for example, the construction of obstetric clinics, the expansion of primary health care for women, and the increase of attention to cancer and HIV prevention for women.

89. Efforts have been made to increase the availability of good quality and reliable data disaggregated by sex and gender-sensitive health indicators to support effective policy development, monitoring and evaluation of women's health. Information collected has been used to inform interventions to ensure safe pregnancies and deliveries, and to provide obstetric care in a targeted manner. Analysis of available data on women's health needs has provided a better indication of the status of maternal health and sexual and reproductive health. The availability of gender statistics and health indicators has also served as the basis for conducting evidence-based research on women's health.

Improving women's access to health services

90. Access to appropriate, affordable and quality health care and health services throughout the life cycle is critical to the overall physical and mental well-being of women. In efforts to increase women's access to health care and health services, priority has been given to improving health infrastructure, broadening the range of services and quality of care, and strengthening the capacity of health professionals to deliver such services.

91. Improvements to health infrastructure benefiting women have included the construction or expansion of hospitals and health centres and increased availability of medical equipment. In some countries, government and the private sector collaborated in the construction of hospitals and clinics. Particular efforts have been made to improve the health infrastructure in rural and remote areas to cover the health needs of women, for example, by introducing mobile clinics or providing village drug kits that cover the needs of women. In recent years, specialized clinics for the treatment of obesity and smoking addiction, which are serious health problems among women, especially young women, have emerged in a number of countries and are increasingly being addressed.

92. Efforts have been made to broaden the range of health services and quality of care for women, including in rural and remote areas. Access to family planning services has been expanded, and specialized counselling services are increasingly available for women, including to victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse. The expansion of networks of hospitals and health centres in some countries has strengthened the availability of health services for women. Increases in the recruitment of physicians and nurses have also been reported.

93. Countries have strengthened the capacity of health professionals to provide quality health care and health services to women. Efforts have been undertaken to train health-care professionals and other service providers inside and outside of government on issues such as reproductive health, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, and non-communicable disease prevention. Specialized training was offered for physicians, midwives and nurses to provide better services, including counselling, for example, on reproductive health issues. Traditional birth attendants and traditional healers were trained in safe motherhood skills and infection control. School physicians and nurses were trained to better serve their student population on issues such as reproductive health. Some countries integrated the gender perspectives of health into the curricula of nursing schools to enhance the quality of care for women.

94. Efforts have also been made to expand women's access to health information, including on reproductive health. Governments have increasingly disseminated

gender-sensitive health information to expand awareness about the availability of health services, and some countries have launched websites on women's health issues such as breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases and healthy ageing. Such efforts have aimed to reach women in general, as well as particular groups of women, such as ethnic minority women and rural women. Specific information was frequently provided to pregnant women to reduce the incidence of child and maternal mortality. Health professionals have also received targeted information to assist them in providing better care to women.

Greater efforts to improve women's sexual and reproductive health

95. In recognition of the critical role of sexual and reproductive health for the improvement of maternal health, a number of countries have expanded coverage of and access to sexual and reproductive health programmes that include safe motherhood and family planning.

96. Every year, 536,000 women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or six weeks following delivery, the majority in developing countries as a result of medical problems that are largely preventable and treatable. In developed regions there are 9 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 450 maternal deaths in developing regions, where 14 countries have maternal mortality rates of at least 1,000 per 100,000 live births. Half of all maternal death (265,000) occurs in sub-Saharan Africa and another third (187,000) in southern Asia.[20]

97. Many countries expanded safe motherhood programmes to promote the health of women. Such programmes aimed to address the health of the mother throughout her pregnancy, and included the provision of prenatal, delivery and postpartum care. Drugs containing iron and iodine to prevent anaemia and reduce risks for mothers during pregnancies and deliveries were provided and steps taken to increase the proportion of births attended by skilled personnel, including midwives, obstetricians or other trained health personnel, and to strengthen access to emergency obstetric care. Services were also increasingly made available in rural and remote areas.

98. Awareness-raising of the importance of adequate nutrition for mothers during pregnancy and lactation to promote the health of mothers and infants was a common strategy. Breastfeeding was more systematically promoted in many countries, resulting in increased length of breastfeeding periods.

99. Governments expanded family planning programmes to assist women in the timing, spacing, and frequency of their pregnancies. Some Governments disseminated information on the safe use of contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies, as well as to prevent sexually transmitted infections, and others made contraceptives available at a reduced cost, or free of charge. An increase in the use of modern contraceptives, in particular oral contraceptives, was registered by some countries. Female condoms were also promoted by some countries as an alternative to male condoms.

100. Adolescent pregnancies are dangerous to the health of the mother and the child, and States have continued their efforts aimed at reducing these numbers. There has been some progress in reducing the numbers of teenage pregnancies, as a result of family planning programmes that included counselling for teenagers on how to prevent pregnancies and education campaigns on the use of contraceptives.

101. While some countries reported a noticeable increase in abortion rates, especially among young women, others reported that rates had either stabilized or decreased. In a number of countries women have the right to an induced abortion, in some cases free of charge.

102. Infertility is increasingly recognized as a sexual and reproductive health issue. As a result, legal frameworks to regulate medically assisted procreation have been enhanced and treatment for infertility provided, although the availability and affordability of such services varied from country to country. Research projects to address the causes of infertility have been funded and information campaigns conducted on infertility and medically assisted treatments.

103. Globally, HIV is the leading cause of death and disease of women of reproductive age,[31] and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care is increasingly addressed within the context of sexual and reproductive health. Efforts to prevent infection and offer women living with HIV opportunities for counselling and treatment have been significantly expanded.

104. Many countries reported on their ongoing public information programmes on HIV prevention, including those directed at adolescents and women. Steps have been taken to increase awareness about mother-to-child transmission, especially among pregnant women. Towards this end, voluntary HIV counselling and testing for pregnant women have been improved and expanded. Steps are increasingly taken to prevent such transmission, including through early diagnosis and prophylactic treatment and expansion of the availability of antiretroviral regimens for preventing mother-to-child transmission. Efforts have been made to expand the provision of maternal milk substitutes to mothers living with HIV to decrease the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child.

Growing attention to women-specific non-communicable diseases

105. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the increase in non-communicable diseases,[32] and Member States have expanded their efforts to address these diseases. This has included increased funding for research to assess the causes, risk factors and impact of different non-communicable diseases on women, and to better understand the opportunities for their prevention and control.

106. Increasingly, measures have been taken to improve the early detection and treatment of cervical cancer, which is the second most common type of cancer among women globally,[31] after breast cancer. The availability of testing through mammograms, ultrasounds and pap smears has been expanded. In some contexts, these are offered free of cost for all women, and in other cases free cervical cancer screening is available for women and girls in specific age groups. In some countries, girls as young as nine are now being offered the human papillomavirus vaccine for cervical cancer, often free of charge. The benefits of early detection of these types of cancers through information and awareness-raising campaigns have been highlighted.

[31] See World Health Organization, *Women and Health: Today's Evidence, Tomorrow's Agenda* (WHO, Geneva, 2009).

[32] See World Health Organization, *Women and the Rapid Rise in Non-communicable Diseases* (WHO, Geneva, 2009).

107. Non-communicable diseases predominate among the causes of mortality and disability among older women who represent a growing proportion of older people in developed and developing countries. Gender-sensitive research has examined the prevention and management of non-communicable diseases, in particular chronic and degenerative diseases such as osteoporosis. Some developed countries, for example, promoted regular check-ups for women starting at age 40 to detect decreased bone mass. A number of countries increased their response to rheumatic and menopause-related diseases, through awareness-raising, counselling on prevention and healthy lifestyles, and expanded treatment services.

108. As women increasingly suffer from tobacco-induced diseases, including cancer, countries developed tobacco prevention programmes targeted at women. These programmes included information dissemination through hotlines, websites and advertisements to raise awareness about the risks of smoking and its health consequences.

3. Gaps and challenges

109. Gains in women's health have been uneven, and significant gaps and challenges persist in achieving the strategic objectives. Health systems in many countries can generate health inequity and inequalities and entrench social stratification that can adversely affect women's access to health care.[33] While Governments paid attention to improving certain areas of health systems, such as infrastructure, capacity-building and financing, progress has been uneven and further improvements are necessary.

110. Considerable challenges continue to exist in achieving sexual and reproductive health for women. Reproductive health problems, such as complications during pregnancies and deliveries, remain the leading cause of women's ill health and death worldwide.[34] The distribution of reproductive health services within and between countries remains highly inequitable.[35] Millennium Development Goal 5, on improving maternal mortality, is the goal where least progress has been made. Access must be increased to modern contraceptives, regular and sufficient antenatal care visits, availability of skilled personnel at delivery, and emergency obstetric care when needed, to ensure that the maternal health targets can be achieved.

111. Other important women's health issues, such as chronic diseases, mental health, tobacco-induced and age-related diseases, do not receive sufficient attention. Very few countries reported measures to prevent and treat these diseases. Statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO) show that the number of women smoking will triple over the next generation, with more than 200 million women dying prematurely from tobacco-induced diseases.[36] Addressing the needs of older women remains a major challenge to health systems.

112. A gender gap in the response to HIV/AIDS persists. Women and girls account for half of HIV cases worldwide and significant percentages of infections in some

[33] See World Health Organization, *Challenging Inequity through Health Systems*, Commission on Social Determinants of Health (Geneva, 2007).

[34] See United Nations Population Fund, *State of the World Population* (UNFPA, New York, 2005).

[35] See World Health Organization, *Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health* (WHO, Geneva, 2008).

[36] Ibid., Tobacco Free Initiative (www.emro.who.int/TFI/sharedworld-women.htm).

regions. More than three quarters of HIV-affected women live in sub-Saharan Africa.[37] While there is an increase in efforts to provide pregnant women living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries with antiretrovirals to prevent mother-to-child transmission,[38] access to treatment for women living with HIV remains a concern. There is also a need to explicitly address the health implications of women's caregiving responsibilities in the context of HIV/AIDS.

113. Adequate nutrition is a key determinant of health throughout the life cycle, and malnutrition among women and girls remains a challenge in many countries. Women have additional nutrient requirements in their reproductive years, which determine their own and their children's nutritional status. Nearly half the women in developing countries suffer from anaemia, which affects their health, limits their activity and greatly increases the risks that they face during pregnancy and childbirth.[39] Eating disorders also require strengthened responses.

114. Violence poses a significant risk to women's sexual and reproductive health, and can result in mental ill health and other chronic health problems. Effective prevention and adequate responses, including the delivery of services, require collaboration between the health system and all other relevant sectors.

115. A robust response to women's health needs is constrained by insufficient financial resources. Some countries were concerned that the recent global financial crisis would result in cuts in public spending in the health sector, which could in particular affect women and girls. With less disposable income, women may be forced to delay or forgo health-care services.[40] The use of gender-responsive budgeting should be enhanced to ensure adequate resource allocations to the health needs of women and girls.[41]

116. Lack of or insufficient data disaggregated by sex and gender-sensitive health indicators has constrained the development of effective gender-specific and gender-sensitive policy responses, resource allocation, and monitoring and evaluation. Meeting the unmet health needs of women and girls requires increased attention to data and indicators.

D. Violence against women

1. Introduction

117. Since the review of the Platform for Action in 2005, violence against women has become a priority issue at the global, regional and national levels. In the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, States resolved to eliminate all forms of

[37] Michel Carael, Hein Marais, Judith Polsky and Aurorita Mendoza, "Is There a Gender Gap in the HIV Response? Evaluating National HIV Responses from the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS Country Reports" (2009).

[38] World Health Organization, United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS and United Nations Children's Fund, "Towards universal access: scaling up priority HIV/AIDS interventions in the health sector" (WHO, Geneva, 2009).

[39] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Gender and Development Plan of Action 2002-2007 (FAO, Paris, 2003).

[40] See E/CN.6/2009/CRP.9.

[41] See Issues paper on the theme "Gender perspectives on global public health: implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals", Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 2009).

discrimination and violence against women and the girl child.[41] In October 2006, the Secretary-General issued an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women. Following the issuance of the study, the General Assembly adopted a series of comprehensive and action-oriented resolutions calling on all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to eliminate violence against women.[42]

118. Following the approval of the formation of a Friends of the Chair group to conduct an in-depth technical review of proposed indicators to measure violence against women (decision 39/116), the Statistical Commission adopted an interim set of indicators in 2009 (decision 40/110), and requested the Friends to continue their work on the indicators. Work to further elaborate existing methodological guidelines for measuring violence against women, and to determine the feasibility and relevance of the interim set of indicators was also initiated.

119. Building on its commitment to women, peace and security through its pathbreaking resolution 1325 in 2000, and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security adopted in 2008 and 2009, the Security Council adopted resolutions dedicated to ending sexual violence in armed conflict.[43]

120. To create momentum around the issue of violence against women, the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched his global campaign "UNiTE to end violence against women" in 2008, to run through 2015. At the request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General also established a database on violence against women — the first global "one-stop" site for information on measures undertaken by Member States to address violence against women (www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase). As of November 2009, more than 80 Member States had submitted information to the database.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

121. The number and type of measures undertaken by Member States to prevent and address violence against women has significantly increased since 2005. A review of these measures reveals the following trends: (a) strengthened and more comprehensive legal, policy and institutional frameworks; (b) increased availability and quality of services for victims/survivors of violence; (c) engagement of multiple stakeholders to prevent violence against women; and (d) improvements in data collection and analysis.

Strengthened and more comprehensive legal, policy and institutional frameworks

122. Legislation provides the foundation for a holistic and effective response to violence against women. In recent years, States, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, have adopted comprehensive laws on violence against women, which not only criminalize such violence and call for the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, but also mandate support and protection for victims/survivors, prevention measures, and the creation of institutional mechanisms, as well as processes to monitor the implementation of the law. Some of these laws address

[42] See General Assembly resolutions 61/143, 62/133 and 63/155; the General Assembly also continues to adopt resolutions on specific forms and manifestations of violence against women, including trafficking in women and girls and violence against women migrant workers.

[43] See Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) (see section on "Women and armed conflict").

multiple forms of violence against women, while others focus on one form of violence, particularly domestic violence. A significant number of comprehensive laws to address trafficking in persons have been adopted, many of which are based on the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000).

123. Since 2005, numerous Member States have amended their legislation on violence against women, taking into account lessons learned. A number of countries have included in their penal codes or other laws explicit criminal offences related to domestic violence, sexual violence and trafficking, and numerous countries have increased the penalties applicable for such violence. Rape within marriage is punishable in an increasing number of States. However, the penalty for rape within marriage continues to be less than the penalty for rape by a stranger in most countries. There is an emerging trend of legislation enacted to explicitly criminalize stalking. Although specific legislation on sexual harassment remains rare, amendments to gender equality legislation, labour laws, and laws regarding public/civil servants have prohibited sexual harassment in numerous countries.

124. Civil protection orders, which provide for the removal of perpetrators from a joint place of residence in cases of domestic violence, and the imposition of restrictions upon their behaviour, are available in an increasing number of countries. Protection orders are now also available in a few countries for other forms of violence, such as forced marriage. Many laws on domestic violence have been amended to extend their application to violence committed within relationships other than marriage. The definition of rape has been broadened in several countries, particularly within Africa, to include a greater range of constitutive acts, and definitions now often focus on consent rather than physical force. Several States have amended migration and other laws in order to provide residency permits and entitlements for victims/survivors of trafficking. Measures guaranteeing the rights of victims/survivors during legal proceedings, including allowing victims/survivors of rape to give evidence *in camera* and providing psychosocial and legal support to victims/survivors, have been adopted in many countries.

125. A noteworthy trend since 2005 has been the enactment of legislation regarding harmful practices, including female genital mutilation/cutting, early and forced marriage and so-called "honour" crimes, in Africa and Europe. Such legislation, particularly with regard to female genital mutilation/cutting, often creates extraterritorial jurisdiction, in the light of the fact that these forms of violence may be committed across borders.

126. Without sensitizing public officials and creating procedures appropriate to the needs of victims/survivors of violence against women, legislation will not be fully effective. Specialized criminal justice procedures and personnel trained in the causes and consequences of violence against women can reduce secondary victimization in the criminal justice system, enhance efficiency, and improve case outcomes, thereby encouraging victims/survivors to report their case. Since 2005, more States have established specialized courts, appointed specialized prosecutors, and created specialized police units and focal points for cases of domestic and/or sexual violence. In many countries, new regulations, protocols, guidelines, manuals and standards have been developed, including on ways to implement protection

orders and identify and assist victims/survivors, and training of relevant officials has increased and, in some instances, been institutionalized.

127. Evaluating the effectiveness and implementation of laws is critical in order to identify areas for improvement and any unintended negative consequences. A growing number of States have undertaken formal evaluations of their laws. In several States, civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the law and developing proposals for its reform.

128. National action plans and strategies on violence against women provide an overarching framework that can enhance coordination among relevant entities and provide time-based targets for activities. Since 2005, numerous countries have adopted dedicated policies on violence against women in general or on particular forms of violence, such as domestic violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation/cutting and forced marriage. In their second or third national action plans, countries have dedicated attention to specific groups of women, or different forms of violence, not addressed in the first plan. Plans and strategies are increasingly adopted at the provincial and local levels, as well as by independent public and private institutions, such as universities. There has been an increase in collaboration between the State and other stakeholders, including entities of the United Nations system, in the development of plans, strategies and programmes in relation to violence against women.

129. Numerous States have systematically incorporated targets and activities on violence against women in their national action plans on other issues, including gender equality, health, HIV/AIDS, societal violence prevention/reduction, development/social inclusion, and integration/migration.

130. International and regional cooperation strategies have increasingly been recognized as an important element in efforts to end violence against women. Numerous cross-border initiatives to enhance the identification of victims/survivors of trafficking, prevent trafficking and ensure victims'/survivors' rehabilitation and reintegration have taken place. New and successful international and regional cooperation efforts have been made to address other forms of violence against women, in particular forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting.

131. The creation of institutional mechanisms dedicated to tackling violence against women indicates strong political will and clearly defines governmental lines of responsibility for addressing the issue. A significant number of countries have created new institutional mechanisms to address violence against women in general, and domestic violence and trafficking specifically, including multisectoral task forces, commissions and individual rapporteurs. In some countries, national conferences have brought together the full range of stakeholders working on violence against women or one of its forms, and enhanced communication and collaboration between them.

Increased availability and quality of services for victims/survivors of violence

132. Victims/survivors of violence against women require timely access to support services that respond to short-term injuries, protect them from further violence, provide support and legal advice, including counselling and psychological care, and address long-term needs, such as accommodation and employment. One of the most promising trends in service provision has been the establishment of centres that

provide a range of services in one location. Such centres now exist in many countries and have been created by the State in collaboration with other stakeholders, including civil society organizations and entities of the United Nations system. In several States, efforts have been made to enhance coordination through referral services and communication procedures.

133. There has been a substantial increase in funding provided by States for services for victims/survivors of violence against women. Shelters and safe houses are more widely available, including specialized shelters for victims/survivors of trafficking. National hotlines, help lines and centres that provide information, counselling, support and referral services for victims/survivors of violence against women, as well as free legal aid, are in place in a growing number of countries. New technology, in particular the Internet, is increasingly being utilized to provide counselling and referral services. Several Governments offer support to victims/survivors in finding long-term housing and assistance to victims/survivors who resign from their employment in order to change residence. In Africa, microfinance projects are being used to provide a new means of livelihood for victims/survivors.

134. In an increasing number of countries, specialized services are available for victims/survivors of trafficking. They include psychological care, assistance in finding alternative employment and long-term housing, social and health-care services, and counselling and legal services. Numerous States now provide recovery and reflection periods to give victims/survivors time to reflect and consider their options. However, in a number of countries assistance to victims/survivors of trafficking continues to depend upon the victims'/survivors' willingness to participate in prosecution.

135. In order to ensure that services are of the highest quality, an increasing number of countries are training health professionals, social workers and others on a victim-centred approach to violence against women. Violence against women has also been incorporated into the training curricula of medical and paramedical personnel, and some countries have instituted monitoring of service provision for quality assurance.

Engagement of multiple stakeholders to prevent violence against women

136. In order to eliminate violence against women, States must not only punish perpetrators, but also undertake measures to prevent such violence. Engaging all stakeholders is necessary in order to change societal attitudes that condone violence against women and perpetuate gender inequality. An increasing range of stakeholders, including representatives of the media, the private sector and civil society organizations, religious and community leaders, young people and celebrities are becoming involved in initiatives to end violence against women. There is growing evidence of clear political will and commitment at the highest levels of government to address this issue, with an increasing number of heads of State providing leadership through public statements and the issuance of decrees condemning various forms of violence, including so-called "honour" crimes, trafficking and female genital mutilation/cutting.

137. Zero tolerance clubs and networks have been created, national White Ribbon Campaign activities are undertaken in an increasing number of countries, and nation-wide campaigns involving high-profile men, such as sporting celebrities and political figures, have been conducted to further engage men and boys in initiatives

to end violence against women. Some States have produced guides for media professionals and trained journalists to encourage them to report on violence against women in a gender-sensitive manner. Several States have in place intervention programmes for perpetrators aimed at changing their attitudes and behaviour and preventing further acts of violence.

138. Numerous countries have undertaken one or more national campaigns to raise awareness of violence against women. In Europe, there has been a focus on domestic violence, while in Africa many countries have raised awareness about sexual violence. Awareness-raising has been undertaken in both Africa and Europe with the aim of preventing female genital mutilation/cutting. States have also conducted campaigns to raise awareness about trafficking in persons, including trafficking in women and girls for prostitution. A significant number of countries around the world now undertake activities on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) and during the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender Violence (25 November to 10 December). Several awareness-raising efforts have utilized new media, such as video games, and different modalities, including regional dialogues and traditional theatre, in order to reach the widest audience possible and engage young people.

139. Numerous awareness-raising efforts have focused on informing victims/survivors and women at risk of violence of their rights. These have included the publication of booklets and websites targeting victims/survivors, service providers and the general public with information on available services, as well as television and radio spots, and billboard advertisements. Some efforts have aimed to reach particular groups of women, such as immigrants, older women and women with disabilities. Specific efforts have been undertaken to ensure that women migrants are aware of the risks and dangers of trafficking.

140. Educational curricula and institutions provide an important forum within which attitudes that perpetuate violence against women can be addressed. In several countries, training has been provided for teachers to equip them with the knowledge necessary to discuss violence against women with their students. In a few countries, specific curricula have been developed and implemented to educate children on violence against women and women's rights, and awareness-raising days have been held in schools.

Improvements in data collection and analysis

141. Solid data on violence against women are critical to the development and implementation of sound laws, policies, strategies and preventative measures. The collection of data must be systematic to provide a clear picture of change over time, and conducted in a gender-sensitive manner by interviewers familiar with the nature of violence against women. Data should be disaggregated by demographic factors such as sex, age and ethnicity.

142. The most comprehensive manner of collecting data on violence against women is through dedicated, population-based surveys. Numerous countries have undertaken dedicated surveys on the prevalence of violence against women, in particular domestic violence, and on the attitudes of the population towards violence against women. In addition, many States now collect data on violence against women through a module within other population-based surveys, such as those on crime and victimization and quality of life.

143. Administrative statistics, such as the number of cases reported to police, or the number of admissions to hospitals, provide a critical source of information on the prevalence of violence against women as well as the response of the health and criminal justice sectors. Measures have been taken to enhance the collection of administrative data by police, prosecutors and other relevant authorities. One promising trend in the collection of administrative data has been the creation of national databases on violence against women in several countries.

144. Studies on the costs of violence against women can create greater awareness of the impact of violence against women on society. A few States have undertaken such studies. Academic studies and those undertaken by NGOs continue to provide important inputs in the policy development process.

145. National capacity to collect accurate data on violence against women is greatly enhanced through specialized training for statisticians, as well as the adoption of agreed guidelines and rules for data collection. A growing number of countries have implemented capacity-building measures for statisticians.

3. Gaps and challenges

146. Despite impressive efforts by numerous countries around the world to address violence against women, this fundamental violation of women's human rights persists. A number of States have had a rise in the number of reported cases of violence against women since 2005. Certain groups of women continue to be exposed to higher levels of violence, including indigenous women, young women, and those from rural areas or ethnic minorities.

147. While there has been a significant increase in initiatives in all parts of the world to address violence against women, such efforts are often not comprehensive, consistent or sustained, and there continues to be insufficient coordination among relevant sectors. One of the largest persisting barriers to addressing violence against women remains the scarcity of resources for the implementation of existing measures.

148. The persistence of attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate negative stereotypes, gender inequality and violence against women in all parts of the world is a significant challenge to preventing and eliminating violence against women. These attitudes are often due to lack of awareness and education, particularly in rural areas, and often result in the stigmatization of victims/survivors, including by their families.

149. While the enactment of specific laws has reduced impunity for violence against women in many countries, discriminatory provisions continue to exist, such as reductions in sentences for perpetrators who marry victims and mitigated sentences for perpetrators of so-called "honour" crimes. Deficiencies also include definitions of rape that require use of force rather than lack of consent and/or do not acknowledge rape within a relationship to constitute an offence, as well as the treatment of sexual violence as a crime against the honour of the family or against decency or society rather than against women's right to bodily integrity. New laws are often ineffectively enforced and not well understood by authorities. In several countries, cases of violence against women are primarily resolved outside of the formal justice system, often with negative results for the victim/survivor.

150. Fear of secondary victimization by the criminal justice system, stigma in the family or community, complexity of court procedures, and/or lack of victim/survivor awareness of their rights under the law and knowledge of how to commence legal proceedings, continue to dissuade women victims/survivors from reporting their cases.

151. The availability and accessibility of services for victims/survivors has increased significantly. In many countries, however, services continue to be only available in central locations and are subject to the exigencies of fluctuating funding from government.

152. Knowledge regarding the scope, prevalence, impact and cost of all forms of violence against women remains inadequate and capacity for collecting such data is insufficient. Even where data are collected they are not always disaggregated and are often not comparable over time or across countries. Poor coordination among agencies collecting data persists, and most national statistical offices do not have the required expertise to research violence against women. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of measures taken continues to be ad hoc and insufficient.

E. Women and armed conflict

1. Introduction

153. Since 1995, there has been a remarkable expansion of the international normative and policy framework, which has created a more comprehensive and multisectoral approach to peace and security, which reflects a stronger recognition of the impact of armed conflict on women and their contributions to peace processes and peacebuilding. In 2010, the Security Council will commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of its landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which promotes women's full and equal participation in peace processes and gender-sensitive peace and security initiatives. In June 2008, the Council took another critical step in adopting resolution 1820 (2008) and reaffirming its resolve to eliminate all forms of sexual violence against women in armed conflict, including by ending impunity. Recent Security Council resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) reaffirmed the commitment of the Council on women, peace and security and outlined further concrete actions.

154. In follow-up to the 2005 World Summit, the Peacebuilding Commission was established in 2006 as an advisory subsidiary body of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The founding resolutions of the Peacebuilding Commission provide a mandate for mainstreaming gender perspectives in all aspects of its work.[44] The strategic frameworks for peacebuilding in the four countries currently on the agenda of the Commission[45] have included important commitments on women's human rights and gender equality. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, which was launched in October 2006, has funded various projects promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in these and additional countries.[46]

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[44] See General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

[45] Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic (see www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/pbcagenda.shtml.

[46] See www.unpbf.org.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

155. Since 2005, four major trends in implementation have emerged at the national level: (a) stronger focus on implementation of global policy commitments; (b) continued focus on increasing women's participation in decision-making processes; (c) strengthened resolve to address sexual and gender-based violence and end impunity; and (d) consistent efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in the area of peace and security.

Stronger focus on implementation of global policy commitments

156. An increasing number of countries are developing national action plans on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to guide implementation through the prioritization and coordination of strategies and activities. As of October 2009, 16 countries[47] had adopted national action plans and several countries were in the process of formulating such plans. In the absence of specific action plans, some countries have integrated strategies and actions on women, peace and security into existing national policies and strategies on gender equality. In a number of countries dedicated mechanisms, such as inter-agency working groups, observatories and networks, have been established to support and monitor the implementation of national strategies and actions on women, peace and security.

157. To raise awareness on global policy commitments, different actors at the national level, including national mechanisms on gender equality and civil society organizations, have undertaken awareness-raising and advocacy efforts on Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), such as the organization of workshops and conferences and the dissemination of information and research on women, peace and security.

158. A number of regional initiatives have been undertaken to support implementation at the national level. The European Union (EU) 1325 partnership, for example, brings together regional and national institutions, including the military, academia and NGOs, to enhance awareness and coordinate implementation efforts regionally. In 2008, EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs adopted a new policy document, the "EU Comprehensive Approach for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security". The African Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have also taken steps to integrate implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) into their work.

159. Cross-regional initiatives have also been undertaken. In the Joint Strategy between Africa and the European Union, adopted during the second Africa-EU summit in Lisbon in December 2007, the African Union and EU committed themselves to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). In September 2009, the European Commission, the African Union and the United Nations co-chaired the High-Level Meeting on the theme "Towards the tenth anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325: joining forces for bringing real progress in the area of women, peace and security".

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[47] Austria, Belgium, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Liberia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda and the United Kingdom (see www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/national_level_impl.html).

Continued focus on increasing women's participation in decision-making processes related to peace and security

160. Although recognition of the importance of women's participation at all levels and in all areas related to peace and security has increased significantly, including at the national, regional and international levels, actual progress in increasing the number of women at senior leadership level has, however, been limited. To accelerate progress, some Governments have taken measures such as integrating provisions on women's inclusion in national peace processes, peacebuilding negotiations and conflict resolution in national policies and in law.

161. In recent years, a growing number of countries have taken measures to increase women's participation in the armed forces, the police and in international peace support operations. Governments have, for example, opened up all career paths in the armed forces and police to both women and men; put in place equal opportunity guidelines and mechanisms; undertaken targeted outreach to women and developed gender-sensitive recruitment materials; and established non-discriminatory working conditions, including in terms of promotion, remuneration, maternity and parental benefits, pensions and sexual harassment. Such efforts have been supported by the United Nations. In the period 2006-2007, for example, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat strengthened its outreach to police and troop-contributing countries and, through a series of policy dialogues and workshops, examined strategies for enhancing gender balance among uniformed personnel. In 2009, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations launched a global effort to recruit more women police officers into its peacekeeping operations with the goal to raise the proportion of female police officers in United Nations peacekeeping missions to 20 per cent by 2014, up from the current 8 per cent.

162. While measures have been taken to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions in United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, more needs to be done. As of November 2009, out of 27 peacekeeping operations, special political missions and peacebuilding support offices, women headed three missions (Central African Republic, Liberia and Nepal) and were deputy heads of seven missions (Burundi, Central African Republic and Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia and the Sudan).

163. Opportunities provided in post-conflict settings have been used in some countries emerging from armed conflict to increase the number of women in decision-making positions and enhance their contributions, including in parliament, government and law enforcement. In the process of revising constitutional and legal frameworks, for example, countries have removed discriminatory legal provisions, introduced gender-sensitive electoral laws and processes, and established temporary special measures, such as quotas for women. Such efforts have been supported by measures to strengthen women's social and economic empowerment. Awareness-raising efforts targeting political parties and the general public on participation and representation of women in decision-making have also been undertaken. As a result of some of these efforts, several post-conflict countries, including Rwanda, Angola, Mozambique, Nepal, Burundi, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan, are now among the 30 countries with the highest representation of women in parliament globally.

164. Women's organizations and networks across regions continued to make critical contributions to peace and security efforts at the national and regional levels. They

have, for example, developed common agendas and put forward declarations, proposals and calls for action targeted at heads of Government as well as leaders of armed groups involved in peace processes. Women have made significant contributions to peace processes through engagement in informal or "Track II" conflict resolution mechanisms. They have also organized training programmes on conflict resolution; undertaken research and produced studies on different peace and security aspects, such as security sector reform; organized awareness-raising campaigns based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) targeted at different stakeholders, including women ex-combatants; and held subregional conferences on women's role in conflict prevention and resolution.

165. Women's local peace initiatives and their political, social and economic empowerment in different regions have also been supported by bilateral and multilateral donor organizations. Women's groups are, for example, represented in joint steering committees to provide advice on the design and implementation of projects funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. There is, however, limited information available on the extent and outcomes of such efforts.

Strengthened resolve to address sexual and gender-based violence and end impunity

166. The urgency of preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict has received unprecedented attention at the international and national levels. The adoption of recent Security Council resolutions, including 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009), as well as developments in international jurisprudence, demonstrate a more serious resolve to end the climate of impunity around such crimes. In 2007, for example, the Special Court for Sierra Leone prosecuted forced marriage as a crime against humanity under international criminal law for the first time in history.[48]

167. Some countries experiencing or emerging from armed conflict have developed, with the support of different partners including bilateral donors and United Nations entities, comprehensive national action plans and/or programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and launched national campaigns to raise awareness of sexual violence and the need for accountability for crimes committed.

168. Critical measures taken to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence have included the adoption of new legislation such as rape laws; the establishment of specialized mechanisms, including special courts to prosecute sexual and gender-based crimes; the development of standard operating procedures for handling gender-based violence cases and capacity-building for medical personnel, the justice system and the police; the distribution of post-rape care equipment and drugs; and the establishment of gender-based violence hotlines. Security and justice sector reforms provide opportunities to prevent violence and address impunity, and some donor countries have provided financial and technical support for such efforts.

169. Important steps have also been taken in terms of establishing accountability mechanisms and processes to address sexual exploitation and abuse by military and civilian personnel in international peace operations, including through establishing

[48] See *The Prosecutor vs. Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu (the AFRC Accused)*, SCSL-04-16-T, Special Court for Sierra Leone, 20 June 2007.

clear standards of conduct and setting up of conduct and discipline units in peacekeeping missions.

Consistent efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in the area of peace and security

170. Increased recognition of the important role of peace support and security sector institutions in promoting gender equality has led to enhanced attention to gender mainstreaming and capacity development. A range of stakeholders, including Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations and civil society, have provided training to military, police and civilian peacekeeping personnel on issues such as the principles of women's human rights and gender equality; the prevention and response to gender-based violence; human trafficking; and sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping and humanitarian staff. Some countries produced training packages and courses based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) for national police and military personnel serving in international peace operations, which have been broadly disseminated to United Nations entities, other Member States and multilateral organizations.

171. Measures have been taken at the regional level. Examples include the launch of the Handbook on Mainstreaming Human Rights and Gender into European Security and Defence Policy and a checklist to ensure gender mainstreaming and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the planning and conduct of European Security and Defence Policy operations. To support these efforts, gender advisers have been deployed to European Security and Defence Policy missions.

172. There has been enhanced attention to gender equality perspectives in humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, adopted in 2007, for example, requires that the specific needs and contributions of women are taken into account and that strategies for the protection against sexual and gender-based violence are integrated into all aspects of humanitarian aid. Some countries have allocated specific budgets in their development cooperation for gender equality and women's empowerment, including in post-conflict settings.

173. Increased awareness of the roles of women, men, boys and girls during conflicts, including as combatants, has, in some cases, led to greater efforts to integrate gender equality perspectives into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and, in particular, enhance women's access to such programmes. In the context of some disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, workshops and trainings have been organized to address the risk of continued gender-based violence in post-conflict situations, such as domestic violence.

174. Improvements in the protection of internally displaced and refugee women have been achieved, notably in terms of legal and policy instruments promoting and protecting their rights, enhanced attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in programmes aimed at providing support to and/or resettling and rehabilitating displaced communities, and in strengthened mandates and responses by humanitarian actors. A number of Member States have enacted or amended laws concerning refugees and asylum-seekers and undertaken legal awareness-raising

activities. Some have provided direct financial and other support to refugees and internally displaced persons, including various education and training programmes.

3. Gaps and challenges

175. While strong global mandates are in place, significant gaps remain in implementation. To date, the uneven and inconsistent approach to implementation has resulted in missed opportunities and in under-resourcing of many efforts to enhance gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment within mainstream peace and security issues. Almost half of the responses to the 15-year review on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action did not address this critical area of concern.

176. Many gaps and challenges remain in guaranteeing women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all stages of peace processes, in particular in formal peace negotiations. Recent research shows that since 1992 women, on average, represented just 7.1 per cent of negotiators on official negotiating delegations, and only 2.1 per cent of signatories to peace agreements. In addition, to date, there have been no women chief mediators, and very few women participated in formal mediation roles.[49] The absence of women from formal processes and peace negotiations continues to hinder attention to gender equality in peace agreements, leading to the omission of key issues such as protection and promotion of women's human rights, including economic and social rights.

177. Many challenges also remain in increasing the number of women in senior positions in the diplomatic service, military and the police and in ensuring women's participation at senior levels in decision-making processes related to peacebuilding and reconstruction. Stereotypes, low levels of education and training and constraints related to personal security and lack of time continue to constitute serious obstacles to women's leadership potential and participation in decision-making.

178. Mechanisms at the international and national levels to identify and select women for senior posts in peace operations, political missions and mediation efforts have been inadequate. Systems for training and mentoring for women in preparation of such assignments need to be strengthened. In addition, efforts are needed to ensure that all potential senior staff have a basic understanding and capacity to address gender equality issues.

179. Despite considerable attention in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to all forms of violence against women, and important initiatives taken by Member States and United Nations entities, few results have been reported in terms of preventing sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and its aftermath and in addressing impunity. This is a serious concern given the evidence in a number of recent thematic and country specific reports to the Security Council[50] that the deliberate targeting of civilians and the use of sexual violence continues in ongoing conflicts. The climate of impunity prevents peace processes from becoming sustainable.

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[49] See United Nations Development Fund for Women, "Women's participation in peace negotiations" (New York, 2009).

[50] See A/63/785-S/2009/158, S/2009/362, S/2009/465, S/2009/472, A/64/364-S/2009/475, S/2009/495, S/2009/535.

180. A range of challenges in the provision of assistance and remedy to survivors of sexual violence and other human rights violations have been identified, including lack of resources, including within court systems; lack of training on the part of security services; and constraints in access to justice owing to costs linked to medical examinations, legal fees and distance from service providers. Support for temporary shelters and livelihood activities for sexual and gender-based violence survivors also remains weak. Survivors often suffer secondary traumas induced by lengthy procedures and social stigma. Insufficient coordination among actors involved in efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence can also hamper access to services. In addition, sex-disaggregated data remain scarce in this area.

181. Women who were involved with armed groups in a variety of roles (such as porters, cooks or "wives" of combatants) have been excluded from the benefits of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Limitations in data on women associated with armed forces and groups has been one of the contributing factors to their exclusion.

182. A continuing challenge is the insufficient attention to gender equality and women's empowerment, including in resource allocations, post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery processes. This is linked to the exclusion of women from the initial stages in decision-making in peace processes, and limited capacity for gender-sensitive analysis and needs assessment, data collection and evaluation in peacebuilding and recovery efforts.

183. In terms of the Platform for Action's objective to reduce excessive military spending and control the availability of armaments, available data show that, with the exception of anti-personnel land mines, there has been no progress. While data on the number of small arms and light weapons currently in circulation globally is unreliable, it is estimated to be at least 875 million.[51] Some Member States reported that small arms continue to lead to a vast spectrum of human rights violations in contemporary conflicts, including rape and sexual violence.

F. Women and the economy

1. Introduction

184. It is increasingly acknowledged that decent work for all women and men is central to the eradication of hunger and poverty, the improvement of economic and social well-being for all and the achievement of sustained economic growth and development. In its ministerial declaration in 2006, the Economic and Social Council expressed its commitment to promote and protect all women's human rights by, inter alia, ensuring equal access to full and productive employment and decent work.[52]

185. In June 2009, the International Labour Conference (ILO) adopted the resolution entitled "Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact" to address the social and employment impact of the international financial and economic crisis.[53]

[51] See S/2008/258.

[52] See A/61/3/Rev.1, chap. III.

[53] See International Labour Organization, "Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact", adopted by the International Labour Conference at its ninety-eighth session (ILO, Geneva, June 2009).

It noted that the crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to shape new gender equality policy responses. Recovery packages should take into account the impact of the economic crises on women and men and integrate gender equality concerns in all response measures. The Conference adopted comprehensive recommendations on gender equality in the world of work, including employment, social protection, fundamental principles and rights at work, social dialogue and tripartism for Governments, employers' organizations, workers' organizations and ILO.[54]

186. In the agreed conclusions on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, adopted in 2008, the Commission on the Status of Women urged Governments to undertake gender-sensitive assessments of national labour laws, policies and programmes and establish gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for employment practices, including those of transnational corporations, building on appropriate multilateral instruments, including the conventions of the International Labour Organization. The Commission called on Governments to allocate adequate resources for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in the workplace, including unequal access to labour market participation and wage inequalities, as well as reconciliation of work and private life for both women and men.[19]

187. The current global financial and economic crisis is threatening the progress made on gender equality in many areas. According to ILO, although reliable, comparable statistical data are not yet available, the current crisis is expected to have a more negative impact on female unemployment rates than male unemployment rates in most regions of the world, in particular in Latin America and the Caribbean.[55] Estimates indicate that the number of unemployed women can increase by up to 22 million in 2009.[55] The differential impact, however, will vary across countries depending on the gender-based job segregation.

188. Women are expected to be disproportionately impacted by the crisis in some countries, as they are more likely than men to be laid off and have limited access to and control over economic resources, such as land and credit. Many women working in manufacturing and export-producing industries in some countries have already lost their jobs, because of the decline in trade. Steps taken to reduce the potential negative impact include, inter alia, introduction or strengthening of social programmes and social safety nets targeting women and increasing access to microfinance. In some countries, the global financial crisis has resulted in a decline in resources available for gender equality and caused a shift in priorities, possibly resulting in diversion of funds from gender equality.

189. Increases in food prices have affected millions of people, especially poor women.[56] Although women play a critical role in the production of food in many parts of the world, they face significant constraints in access to productive resources such as land, credit, extension services and technology. Climate change has

[54] See International Labour Organization, Report of the Committee on Gender Equality, Provisional Record No. 13, International Labour Conference, ninety-eighth session (ILO, Geneva, 2009) (ILC98-PR13-2009-06-0323-1-En.doc).

[55] See International Labour Organization, *Gender equality at the heart of decent work* (ILO, Geneva, 2009).

[56] See World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Gender in Agriculture Source Book* (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2009).

negatively impacted women's role in the agricultural sector in some parts of the world. Food shortages resulting from cyclical droughts, for example, increased time burdens for women in agricultural work.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

190. While women's access to employment opportunities has increased in recent years, women are more likely than men to have low-paid and vulnerable jobs, with limited or no social protection, basic rights or voice at work.[57] Recent statistics indicate that globally, women accounted for almost 40 per cent of all paid employment outside of agriculture in 2006, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.[58] Despite this increase, female labour force participation was estimated to be 52.6 per cent in 2008, compared with male labour force participation of 77.5 per cent.[59] There are significant differences across regions and countries. In 2008, the global unemployment rate for women (6.3 per cent) was higher than for men (5.9 per cent).[59] Responses from some countries indicated, however, that in some cases men's unemployment rate was higher than women's, possibly because of women's willingness to accept low-paying jobs.

191. Available data indicate that access to labour markets and to decent work remains particularly limited for women.[57] Women are disproportionately represented in the informal sector. At the global level, the share of vulnerable employment — unpaid family workers and own-account workers — in total female employment was 52.7 per cent in 2007, as compared with 49.1 per cent for men. There was considerable variation at the regional level, with the largest gaps found in North Africa and the Middle East.[59]

192. The review of measures taken at the national level to improve the situation of women in the labour market suggests four trends: (a) improvements in legislative and policy frameworks for women's participation in the labour market; (b) continued focus on gender segregation, discrimination and gender wage gaps in the labour market; (c) increased attention to the disproportionate burden of unpaid work on women; and (d) efforts to address the constraints faced by specific groups of women.

Improvements in legislative and policy frameworks for women's participation in the labour market

193. Progress in increasing women's participation in the labour market can be attributed to a wide range of interventions, including legislation, policies and programmes that have addressed various dimensions of gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination in the labour market. Measures to bring laws and policies in line with international conventions included ratification of ILO conventions, the adoption of new legislation and amendments to labour laws and the review of existing legislation and policies in the labour market. The enactment of legislation and the inclusion of provisions that guarantee equal pay for work of equal value for women and men in employment laws, for example, have been

[57] See International Labour Organization, *Global employment trends for women* (ILO, Geneva, 2008).

[58] See *Millennium Development Goals Report 2008* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.I.18).

[59] International Labour Organization, *Global employment trends for women* (ILO, Geneva, 2009).

crucial in addressing gender wage gaps, including by giving women the right to file a claim for compensation for gender wage discrimination. Some countries have removed bans on women's employment in certain sectors, for example, in underground mining, which, while intended to protect women, could restrict their employment options.

194. Legislative and policy measures have been taken to address direct and indirect discrimination against women in the workplace, including sexual harassment, unequal remuneration and dismissal owing to pregnancy and childbirth. Measures to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace included the adoption of new legislation and amendments to existing legislation to increase compensatory provisions. Mechanisms have been established to monitor and ensure the implementation of gender-sensitive legislation and policies in the labour market. These included a Government-appointed sex discrimination commissioner to monitor sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace and the appointment of women coordinators at public and private workplaces to monitor and prevent sexual harassment.

Continued focus on gender segregation, discrimination and gender wage gaps in the labour market

195. In addition to legislation and policies, a wide range of measures have been undertaken to address gender segregation, discrimination and gender wage gaps in the labour market. The implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was, for example, supported by the development of codes of practice and in one case by development of a methodology for assessing the complexity of jobs and positions and setting basic wage levels without differentiation on the grounds of sex to enhance the transparency of remuneration. Other measures promoting a reduction of gender wage gaps included the establishment of monitoring mechanisms, increasing the minimum wage and requiring companies with more than 50 employees to develop plans on addressing gender wage gaps. Research on the extent and causes of gender wage gaps, awareness-raising campaigns and measures to eliminate gender stereotypes enhanced the efforts to narrow gender wage gaps.

196. Countries sought to improve women's access to the labour market through training programmes and public works programmes. To reduce gender-based occupational segregation in the labour market, some Governments encouraged women to enter male-dominated occupations and eliminated gender stereotypes in classification of occupations. Mentoring programmes were also used to increase the representation of women in economic decision-making positions.

197. One of the innovations in addressing discrimination has been the encouragement of the private sector's role in promoting women's full and effective participation in the labour market. A number of countries provided financial incentives to encourage commitment to gender equality and awards to companies promoting gender equality in the workplace, including family-friendly policies. A few Governments offered the private sector tax and social security incentives for hiring women. Awareness-raising campaigns targeted the private sector, through seminars, manuals and information campaigns. Efforts were undertaken to promote gender equality within the context of initiatives on corporate social responsibility.

Increased attention to the disproportionate burden of unpaid work on women

198. Gender inequality and discrimination contribute to the continuing imbalance in the division of labour between women and men and perpetuate stereotypic perceptions of men as primary wage earners and women as secondary earners. Unequal sharing of unpaid work, including caregiving, between women and men constrains women's ability to fully participate in education and training, the labour market and the public sphere. Redistributing the burden of unpaid work between women and men requires a range of interventions focused on transforming both individual attitudes and behaviours and institutional arrangements, particularly in the labour market. Across a range of countries, policy responses to address this inequality focused on the redistribution of the burden of unpaid work between women and men, provision of accessible and affordable care services and investments to improve public infrastructure.

199. Initiatives to redistribute the burden of unpaid work between women and men included the extension of employment benefits, such as parental leaves. While parental leave provisions primarily target women in most countries, an increasing number of countries have introduced paternal leave policies that grant fathers leave in connection with childbirth, or made amendments to parental leave legislation to allow fathers employed in the civil service to take leave. Outreach and awareness-raising activities, in particular activities that highlight the role of fathers in caregiving for children, have been effective in expanding coverage and usage of parental leaves.

200. The provision of accessible and affordable care services, including child and elder care, primary education and health services plays a key role in helping women and men reconcile work and family responsibilities. Family-friendly working arrangements, such as teleworking, and family care leave have been introduced in many countries to redistribute the burden of unpaid work between women and men. Other policy interventions included the provision of tax rebates and subsidies for childcare or cash benefits for children, and investment in extension and improvement of childcare facilities.

201. Investments in public infrastructure such as water, transportation and energy can significantly reduce women's burden of unpaid work, which includes in many countries not only domestic work and caregiving, but also the collection of water and fuel. Improvements in water, sanitation and road facilities have improved the situation of women by reducing time spent on collecting water and firewood.

Efforts to address the constraints faced by specific groups of women

202. Numerous countries have undertaken initiatives, such as training programmes, to address the constraints of specific groups of women, including women entrepreneurs, unemployed and retrenched women workers, women re-entering the labour market, migrant women, single mothers, women with disabilities, and women from rural areas and from ethnic minority groups. The increasing number of initiatives reflects the awareness and understanding among policymakers of the importance of addressing the particular needs and priorities of women in vulnerable situations.

203. The importance of enterprise development for women is increasingly recognized in poverty alleviation and economic development strategies.[55] Countries

have undertaken initiatives to support women entrepreneurs concentrated in small and precarious enterprises, through training programmes, conferences, seminars, workshops and trade fairs. Tools, such as training manuals and case studies of good practices on women's entrepreneurship, have also been developed.

204. Networks of successful women entrepreneurs and mentorship programmes have encouraged women to start up and run businesses, and provided women entrepreneurs with advice on management skills. A number of countries sought to increase the access of women entrepreneurs to credit through the provision of specific funds and microfinance schemes. Research has been undertaken on women's entrepreneurship, including on enabling factors for growth in gender-segregated industries and obstacles to women's entrepreneurship.

205. A number of countries introduced specific gender equality policies for the agricultural sector and established specialized units within Ministries of Agriculture to reduce gender inequalities in rural areas. Efforts have been made to ensure women's specific needs and priorities are addressed in agricultural policies. Women living in rural areas have benefited from vocational training in agro-technology and computer skills as well as increased access to microcredit schemes and direct payments — income support provided by Governments to farmers. Women's participation in the management of cooperatives was also promoted. Increased access to agricultural extension services, such as advisory services, information and training, and credit facilities, had a positive impact on women's agricultural activities, by increasing technical proficiency and access to productive resources. Agricultural training courses provided women with information and skills in horticulture and agro-processing.

206. A notable development is the actions taken by a number of countries to address the constraints faced by domestic workers, in particular the fact that they are often not covered, or only partially covered, by labour legislation and social protection measures. Legislation was amended to include domestic workers, to recognize their right to the minimum wage, to specify the length of their working day, and to make provisions for annual leave and maternity leave. Domestic workers in some countries were also able to register for unemployment insurance.

3. Gaps and challenges

207. Significant constraints to women's access to full employment and decent work remain in many parts of the world, despite reported efforts to address gender inequalities in the labour market. Women are often concentrated in low-paid jobs with little security and limited access to decision-making positions. Both horizontal and vertical segregation remain a challenge in many countries. Women also bear the disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work. They are highly concentrated in part-time work, in part owing to unequal sharing of family responsibilities.

208. Gender wage gaps persist in all parts of the world and are estimated to range from 3 to 51 per cent, with a global average of 17 per cent.[60] A range of factors contributing to gender wage gaps have been identified, including gender stereotypes, women's lower level of education, horizontal segregation, predominance in part-time work and low-skilled jobs and unequal responsibility for

[60] See International Trade Union Confederation, *The Global Gender Pay Gap* (www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/gap-1.pdf).

unpaid work. In some cases, women also have limited access to employment compensation packages, such as overtime payments or bonuses. The absence of effective monitoring mechanisms remains a challenge for ensuring the application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

209. Continued violations of women's rights in the labour market include the dismissal of pregnant women and women with young children. Sexual harassment remains a significant problem in many countries, especially for migrant women working as domestic workers.

210. Women entrepreneurs continue to face constraints in access to credit, owing to lack of collateral and negative perceptions about women's business capabilities. Constraints faced by women in micro- and small-businesses include lack of business management skills and illiteracy, as well as discriminatory sociocultural norms and practices. Limited access to finance has forced many women entrepreneurs to reinvest their profits into their businesses. Microfinance (see sect. II.A of the present report) has failed to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs in business growth and expansion, and the needs of women farmers who have cash flow patterns dependent on crop cycles.

211. While training programmes have been instrumental in increasing women's access to the labour market, women's effective participation can be constrained by lack of childcare, lack of flexibility in course provision and limited access to finance. Even when women successfully complete training programmes, they may not be able to secure employment owing to lack of childcare, inflexible working arrangements, in part owing to negative attitudes of employers, limited access to information on labour market opportunities, and the persistence of gender stereotypes.

212. Since the informal sector is often not covered by regulation, inspection and protection, women are at a higher risk of exploitation and violation of their rights. Workers in the informal economy are often outside the reach of labour legislation and typically lack health, pension and other work-related benefits. Many, for example, are not covered by provisions for maternity leave. Only a few responses addressed protection of women in the informal sector.

213. Lack of timely, reliable and comparable sex-disaggregated data on women's paid and unpaid contribution to the economy is a major obstacle to evidence-based gender-sensitive policymaking. Gaps exist in the availability of reliable and comparable data on women's employment, and women entrepreneurs. Women's employment is undercounted in official statistics, in particular in agriculture and in informal sector activities.

G. Women in power and decision-making

1. Introduction

214. International human rights conventions and global policy frameworks have recognized the participation of women in decision-making processes as a human rights issue, essential for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as a critical element in democratization. Member States emphasized that the promotion of full and equal opportunities for women in

decision-making is a necessary precondition for sustainable development, peace and security.

215. Commitments to improve women's participation in decision-making have been made at global and regional levels. At the 2005 World Summit, Member States resolved to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination, including through increased representation of women in government decision-making bodies and their equal opportunity to participate fully in the political process.[17]

216. In 2006, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas. Subsequent agreed conclusions of the Commission in 2008 and 2009 reiterated the importance of the full and equal participation of women in political, social and economic decision-making, including in administrative entities responsible for economic and public finance policies. Governments were urged to establish concrete goals and benchmarks to enhance women's equal participation in decision-making processes at all levels and to foster the positive portrayal of women and girls as leaders and decision makers in all areas.[61]

217. The Security Council, in its resolution 1889 (2009), urged Member States to take measures to improve women's participation in decision-making processes during all stages of peace processes.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

218. Globally, women held 18.8 per cent of seats in single/lower chambers of parliament as of November 2009, which indicated steady but modest progress, compared to 11.3 per cent in 1995. The 30 per cent target set in the 1990s[2] has been met only in 24 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, where women reached or surpassed 30 per cent representation of women in single/lower chambers, compared to only six European countries in 1998. One quarter of all parliamentary chambers have less than 10 per cent women members and nine chambers have no women members at all (mainly in the Pacific Islands and the Arab Gulf States). In terms of senior leadership within parliaments, currently 35 women preside over one of the houses of the 187 existing parliaments.[62]

219. The increases in women's parliamentary representation are not evenly distributed across regions. The greatest gains were achieved in the Americas, with 22.6 per cent women in parliament, and in European countries, within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe framework with 21.5 per cent. In Asia women held 18.6 per cent seats in parliament, in sub-Saharan Africa 17.8 per cent, in the Pacific region 13 per cent, and in the Arab States 9 per cent.

220. Since 2005, some important milestones have, however, been achieved. In 2006, for the first time, both women and men stood for election and voted in the United Arab Emirates; Rwanda became the first country in the world to elect a majority of women to its lower house of parliament (56.3 per cent) in September 2008; and five women became members of Kuwait's parliament for the first time in 2009.[62] In 2008, the Southern African Development Community set a regional

[61] See E/2006/27, E/2008/27, E/2009/27.

[62] See Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009 (www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm).

precedent when it raised its target for women's representation in decision-making positions in the public and private sector from 30 to 50 per cent, to be met by 2015.

221. As of November 2009, women were heads of State in eight countries (Argentina, Chile, Finland, India, Ireland, Liberia, Lithuania and the Philippines) and heads of Government in six countries (Bangladesh, Croatia, Germany, Iceland, Mozambique and Ukraine). In comparison, in 1995, 12 women were heads of State or Government.

222. In the executive branch of government, women held 16.1 per cent of all ministerial portfolios in 2008. Few countries met or surpassed the 50 per cent mark for women in ministerial positions in recent years. Twenty-two countries had over 30 per cent women in the cabinet; and the number of countries with no women ministers declined from 19 to 13 between 2005 and 2008.[63] Most ministerial portfolios held by women were related to social affairs, family, children, youth, women's affairs, education and the environment. Nevertheless, there was some progress, with women heading ministries for trade, labour, foreign affairs and justice.

223. In the civil service, women have made progress in representation, particularly at the middle managerial levels, but top management positions continue to be dominated by men. Member States reported some improvement in the representation of women in the Foreign Service, although women continue to be underrepresented at the level of ambassador. The number of women permanent representatives and observers to United Nations Headquarters in New York, for example, increased from 13 to 23 between 2005 and July 2009.

224. The judiciary and law enforcement sector remain heavily male dominated. In some countries, women made inroads in the judiciary, including through the first-time appointment of women judges and through the appointments of women to Supreme Courts. At the international level, 9 out of 18 judges of the International Criminal Court are women, as of November 2009.[64] Women make up 30 per cent of the police force in only two countries — Australia and South Africa, with the global average below 10 per cent.[65] A number of countries reported on their efforts to increase the number of women in the police and the armed forces.

225. The representation of women in local-level decision-making is less well-documented and progress is more difficult to measure. Results at the local level do not necessarily mirror those at national level. Data from Latin America and the Caribbean[66] and Europe[67] suggest that in 2008 about 10 per cent of mayors were women, and about 25 per cent of seats in local councils were held by women.

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[63] See Inter-Parliamentary Union, press release 298, "Women in politics: not enough progress" (IPU, Geneva, 2008).

[64] See International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC/Structure+of+the+Court/Chambers/The+Judges/.

[65] See T. Denham, "Police Reform and Gender", M. Bastick and K. Valasek (Eds.), "Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit", Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (Geneva, 2008).

[66] See Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean (http://www.eclac.cl/oig/default.asp?idioma=IN; accessed on 18 November 2009).

[67] See Council of Europe, "Sex-disaggregated statistics on the participation of women and men in political and public decision-making in Council of Europe member states. Situation as of 2008" (www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/equality/PDF_CDEG_2009_1_final_en.pdf).

226. Some progress was reported on the role of women in the private sector, including in accessing senior positions such as senior executives and members of boards of directors. Globally, women hold 24 per cent of senior management positions in privately held businesses in 2009, a marginal improvement from 2004, when 19 per cent of senior level positions were held by women.[68] In 2008, in Europe, out of 5,146 board seats, 501 were held by women (9.7 per cent), and eight women headed companies in the Financial Times Europe 500.[69] There are no women heading central banks in any of the 27 European Union member States.[70] Women's leadership in companies and firms accounted for 10 per cent of executive positions in Asia, less than 25 per cent in North America, and 10 per cent in Europe.[71]

227. Three major trends were identified in efforts to implement this critical area of concern at the national level: (a) the effective implementation of quotas to strengthen women's access to and participation in decision-making forums; (b) creating an enabling environment for women's participation in decision-making; and (c) increased recognition of the linkages between women's role in decision-making and policy outcomes.

Effective implementation of quotas to strengthen women's access to and participation in decision-making forums

228. Quotas and other temporary special measures, such as reserved seats, have played a significant role in increasing the number of women in public life. They have, for example, been used in the majority of the 24 countries with 30 or more per cent women in parliament. Quotas have been implemented through constitutions and laws and are also applied by political parties on a voluntary basis. Their success depends on the type of electoral system, the commitment of party leaders and Governments to promote women in politics, and the strength of women's organizations.

229. In the public sector, quota provisions vary from 10 to 50 per cent women in the legislative and executive branches. In a more recent trend, Member States have introduced quota systems that establish a maximum representation for both sexes, with the requirement, for example, that neither women nor men constitute more than 60 per cent and no less than 40 per cent of candidates on electoral lists.

230. In addition to their use in electoral processes, quotas have been applied to civil service recruitment processes, and appointments to advisory and administrative bodies and to the selection of judges, and have contributed to making recruitment and selection rules more transparent. Quotas have also been applied effectively in the private sector to address the underrepresentation of women in economic

[68] See Grant Thornton International, *International Business Report 2009 — Global overview: privately held businesses: the lifeblood of the economy* (www.gt.com/staticfiles//GTCom/Grant%20Thornton%20Thinking/International/IBR_2009_-_Global_overview_FINAL_(Med_Res).pdf).

[69] See Catalyst, "Women in Europe: Quick takes", Catalyst (New York, 2009) (www.catalyst.org/publication/285/women-in-europe).

[70] See European Union, "The EU and Gender Equality. Advancing women's full potential", "EU Insight", Delegation of the European Commission to the United States.

[71] See Catalyst, *Catalyst Member Benchmarking Report 2009*, Catalyst (New York, 2009) (www.catalyst.org/publications/345/2009-catalyst-member-benchmarking-report).

decision-making roles, such as members of boards of directors of trading companies. Some Member States, for example, have made the mandatory requirement that women represent 40 per cent of the board of directors of State-owned companies within a specified time frame.

231. To increase their effectiveness, quota systems have been supplemented by rules governing the placement or ranking order of candidates on electoral lists to increase the potential for women to be elected. Some countries have set specific time-bound targets and taken a staggered approach by implementing quota provisions gradually and increasing the percentage of women candidates over several electoral cycles.

232. To strengthen the application of existing provisions, electoral laws or regulations increasingly foresee sanctions for political parties that do not comply with quota requirements when putting forward candidate lists. Sanctions can include the right of the electoral authorities to reject electoral lists without the required number of women, to impose financial fines, or to reduce the public financing for electoral campaigns.

Creating an enabling environment for women's participation in decision-making

233. Constitutions and legislation in many countries guarantee the principle of equal access to public office. In addition, many national action plans on gender equality prioritize the participation of women in political and other decision-making processes, including in the context of national development plans.

234. Increasing access to funding has proven to be an effective measure to support women seeking political office. Funding can include equal financial support to all candidates regardless of sex and additional public funds for political parties that increase the number of women on electoral lists. In some cases, grants have been provided for leadership training for women. Special financial support has also been provided for elected members of the underrepresented sex.

235. Training and capacity development opportunities have increased women's leadership skills as candidates and elected officials, including essential skills for running campaigns, public speaking, fund-raising and developing key messages. Some public initiatives have focused on increasing women's knowledge on political institutions at different levels of government, election processes and citizen oversight mechanisms. Gender equality training to both female and male government officials and parliamentarians has been increased, especially in the area of gender-sensitive policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. In the private sector, training programmes have focused on preparing women for senior and managerial positions through leadership skills training and mentoring.

236. Cooperation, dialogue and knowledge-sharing between the private sector and the government have become a means to strengthen the commitment of the private sector to the promotion of women in top managerial positions. To encourage the hiring and promotion of women, Government-operated databases of qualified women have been established; and councils composed of senior management executives have been created to advocate for women in management positions. Some Member States have established special awards to recognize outstanding women leaders in business or reward companies that strive for gender equality at top levels of management.

237. Targeted campaigns have specifically aimed to strengthen voter confidence in and support for women candidates. Some campaigns had a more comprehensive focus on gender equality, raising awareness on women's equal participation in public life as well as their full access to productive resources and employment. Traditional leaders and local authorities have sensitized communities about the importance of women's participation in decision-making.

238. Networks of women leaders have contributed to enhancing women's visibility and voice into decision-making. In a number of countries, women parliamentarians have formed caucuses in parliament, either within one political group or bringing together all political groups in parliament. Some parliaments have set up specialized committees for equal opportunities and gender equality as important mechanisms for monitoring the development and implementation of gender equality legislation. Such committees can facilitate discussions on national gender equality policies, scrutinize the gender impact of proposed legislation, call for specific legislation, such as laws on domestic violence, or solicit views from and disseminate information to various constituencies.

239. In a number of countries, elected women at the local government level have established networks to exchange strategies and experiences on advancing the gender equality agenda. Examples include the Latin American Network of Associations of Elected Women Leaders in Local Governments,[72] and the network of Arab women in local government, both launched in 2008. Within the private sector, a number of countries reported on networks of women business leaders.

240. Ensuring universal access to birth certificates and identification cards required to register in electoral districts and to vote has enhanced citizen's capacity to participate in elections in some regions.

241. Governments, international research networks and non-governmental organizations have set up databases for research and advocacy purposes. These databases are designed to monitor election results, appointments of women to different governmental bodies and to board positions in companies. Research has been carried out to review and assess the impact of existing measures. More recently, studies have assessed the positive correlation between the representation of women in management and the performance of companies.

Increased recognition of the linkages between women's role in decision-making and policy outcomes

242. The positive contribution of participation of women in decision-making processes to democratic and economic processes, leading to important policy outcomes, has been increasingly recognized.

243. Member States reported, for example, that women parliamentarians ensure attention to important gender perspective in the legislative process. In many countries, women's participation in public office has been instrumental in developing gender-sensitive policies and programmes, promoting gender-responsive budgeting initiatives, and adopting laws and policies to combat violence against women. Similarly, in the private sector, evidence has shown that a higher number of

[72] See www.un-instraw.org/en/media-centre/press-releases/latin-america-new-network-of-women-s-associations-in-local-governm.html.

women on boards of directors constitutes a good business strategy and can improve the overall performance of companies.

3. Gaps and challenges

244. Despite the increasing numbers of women in public and political life in all regions, women are still underrepresented at senior decision-making levels in all areas. The underrepresentation of different groups of women, for example, indigenous women and women from rural and isolated areas, in political and public life is even higher in most societies. In some areas, discriminatory attitudes and practices at the local level limit the space for women's political expression within their communities.

245. While significant progress has been made in establishing quotas, effective implementation remains a challenge. Member States continue to report the inconsistent implementation of quota regulations and provisions, including their uneven application across different levels of government and the ineffective application of sanctions.

246. Lack of commitment from political parties and male leaders are important structural barriers to women's access to senior political and economic positions. Discriminatory attitudes in selection processes and customary practices are often reported as factors that prevent women's full and equal access to public life. Women's limited access to resources and education continues to be a commonly reported barrier to pursuing a career in politics or in public life.

247. The persistence of gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes regarding the roles of women and men, including women's ability to lead, continues to be a significant barrier to achieving equal participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels. Women who are active in politics often encounter negative feedback. Owing to the prevalence of gender stereotypes, voters, including women, continue to demonstrate a lack of trust in women's leadership capacity by not voting for women candidates.

248. The impact of women in decision-making positions in politics and other areas has been constrained by their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions, which limits their potential to influence policymaking from a gender perspective. In addition, the organizational culture and rules of procedure within parliaments, political parties and other bodies can contribute to the marginalization of women. Making institutions gender-sensitive, through improving working methods and institutional cultures, would increase their ability to address gender equality issues in legislative and policy development.

249. The difficulty of reconciling work and family responsibilities constitutes a significant obstacle for women's full participation in political and public life. Family-friendly policies and measures must be put in place in all institutions and workplaces, including parliaments, to ensure that men as well as women participate fully in family life and share caregiving responsibilities more equally.

250. Monitoring women's participation in decision-making bodies beyond the political arena remains a challenge in many countries. While data on women's representation in parliament and the top positions of government are widely available, access to reliable, comparable data is limited in other areas, in particular on the civil service, the judiciary, academia and the media, as well as in economic

decision-making. The regular collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data of women and men at all levels of decision-making need to be strengthened. Improved access to data would enable Governments and other stakeholders to strengthen legal and policy measures to increase women's role in decision-making in all areas.

H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

1. Introduction

251. Institutional mechanisms play a catalytic role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Platform for Action elaborated on the purpose of institutional mechanisms for gender equality, and gave particular attention to the role of national machinery as the "central policy-coordinating unit inside Government", supporting government-wide mainstreaming of gender equality perspectives in all policy areas.[73] The Platform noted that Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.[74] Governments were also called on to collect, compile, analyse and present on a regular basis data disaggregated by age, sex, socio-economic and other relevant indicators, including number of dependants, for utilization in policy and programme planning and implementation.[75]

252. The importance of mainstreaming gender perspectives in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes is increasingly raised in intergovernmental processes, for example, the 2005 World Summit[17] and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in 2008.[18] The need for effective and efficient institutional structures to provide technical and substantive support to such efforts has been highlighted.

253. The Commission on the Status of Women has consistently highlighted the need for strong national mechanisms to advocate for, support, monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender equality legislation, plans and programmes in its agreed conclusions since 2006.[76] In new methods of work adopted in 2006, the Commission decided to annually assess progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on identified priority themes.[77] In addition, the Economic and Social Council continues to provide detailed guidance to the United Nations system on the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes on an annual basis.[78]

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[73] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. IV, annex II, para. 201.

[74] Ibid., para. 202.

[75] Ibid., para. 206 (b).

[76] See E/2007/27, E/2008/27 and E/2009/27.

[77] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9, para. 18.

[78] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/12.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

254. Three major trends in implementation of this critical area of concern at national level have emerged: (a) continued emphasis on strengthening the role of institutional mechanisms, including national machineries for gender equality; (b) consistent focus on promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming across all sectors; and (c) greater efforts to collect data disaggregated by sex and use gender-sensitive indicators.

Continued emphasis on strengthening the role of institutional mechanisms, including national machineries for gender equality

255. Institutional mechanisms remain critical drivers for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Their capacity to act as catalysts and advocates for change, and to respond to the changing contexts for the promotion of gender equality, has been enhanced in a number of ways.

256. Since 1995, national machineries for the advancement of women have been a core component of the institutional framework in many countries, and governments have continued to strengthen such machineries. A number of countries consider the location of the national machinery within government to be an indicator of the political support for gender equality, as well as of the national machinery's authority, access to and role in governmental decision-making. In some countries, the national machinery has been relocated to the President's or Prime Minister's Office to send a strong message about the government's commitment to gender equality. A number of countries have established or maintained "stand-alone" gender equality ministries for the same purpose.

257. In most countries, national machineries continued to be part of a ministry whose portfolio may encompass responsibility for social issues, including family, social welfare and children's affairs, or health, public service, or labour/employment matters. In these cases, the national machinery may be a Department, Office, Bureau or Directorate. Some national machineries have been repeatedly reorganized, including as a result of elections. While such reorganization or institutional change has enhanced the location and power of national machineries in some countries, in others, their ability to promote gender equality policies has been reduced owing to lack of continuity in responsibility for gender equality issues within government.

258. Since 2005, the mandates and functions of some national machineries were changed by new legislation, in particular gender equality acts, government decrees or administrative action. Many national machineries continued to have responsibility for promoting, supporting and monitoring the incorporation of gender perspectives in all policy areas; the development and monitoring of the implementation of gender equality plans, strategies and programmes; and the establishment of legislation. While national machineries in many countries reportedly address all critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action as well as the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[79] some national machineries placed greater emphasis on particular issues, including, for example, women's human rights, women's employment, the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities to facilitate women's access to the labour market, violence against women, trafficking

[79] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

in women, the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, or the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

259. National machineries for gender equality in many countries continued to have lead responsibility for preparing reports, in coordination with other parts of the Government, on compliance with gender equality laws and policies, for submission to Parliament, as well as to international human rights treaty bodies, especially the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Many countries regularly adhered to such requirements, thereby enhancing accountability for promotion of gender equality.

260. Many national machineries expanded their capacity-development and training functions, in particular on gender mainstreaming, for all sectors of government, and organized seminars and workshops for different stakeholders, including senior managers and decision makers.

261. The human and financial resources allocated to national machineries have only rarely been commensurate with their assigned functions. While some countries reported additional resource allocations from the State budget, particularly for staff and for capacity-building activities, national machineries in a number of developing countries continued to rely on donor contributions for some of their activities, and in particular for staff.

262. In the last few years, the number and diversity of institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls has continued to expand in many countries. A number of countries have strengthened or created mechanisms and structures to enhance accountability for the implementation of legal and policy commitments to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. Increasingly, autonomous gender equality boards, anti-discrimination tribunals, equal opportunity commissions, ombudspersons or similar bodies have been established to provide women with avenues for redress against discrimination.

263. In many countries gender equality commissions or councils, with high-level participants from government and representatives of a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society, academia and the business sector, serve in an advisory role to Government and monitor progress in the implementation of commitments to gender equality. More recently, a number of countries have created gender equality observatories, which are sometimes an arm of, and supported by, the national machinery for gender equality, and measure progress towards gender equality and provide information to the general public.

264. The trend towards decentralization of institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality has continued. Mechanisms at provincial, municipal and local levels have been created or strengthened in a number of countries. Many countries have appointed gender focal points or equality advisers in all, or many, sectors of government, sometimes at the highest level, to support gender mainstreaming and ensure that gender equality issues are integrated in policies and programmes. In some countries, inter-ministerial task forces have been assigned responsibility for coordinating the work of such focal points in a number of countries, and in others such coordination has been entrusted to formal or informal networks that sometimes also include officials from regional and provincial/municipal levels. In a number of countries, these coordination structures

have enhanced opportunities for gender equality specialists to exchange information, experiences and good practices.

265. In some countries, specialized gender equality commissions or ombudspersons have been abolished and merged into newly created equality commissions with responsibility for monitoring, advising on and providing redress against discrimination on a number of grounds, including race, ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation, in addition to gender-based discrimination. There has been insufficient research on the implications and impacts of this development.

266. Institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality have been increasingly established in the legislative branch. For example, gender equality caucuses or committees work in a growing number of Parliaments to assess the gender equality impact of proposed legislation and to initiate and lobby for legislation to eliminate discrimination against women. In some countries, specialized committees or associations have been created by the judiciary to promote gender equality and women's rights.

267. Governments, and especially national machineries for the advancement of women, recognize the pivotal role of women's organizations for the promotion of gender equality. Many continued to involve them in the development and implementation of national gender equality policies and strategies. Some Governments supported the activities of NGOs, or relied on them to deliver services to women, and provide training on gender equality. In a number of countries, women's NGOs were invited to submit inputs or comments to the national machinery within the framework of the State party's compliance with its reporting obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Some countries included representatives of NGOs as part of official delegations to international conferences, including United Nations conferences.

268. New partnerships between institutional mechanisms and the private sector, and international and regional organizations have also been reported.

Consistent focus on promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming

269. Since 2005, the gender mainstreaming strategy has been reaffirmed and more firmly established as critical for the promotion of gender equality across all sectors and in all areas of public policy. A number of countries are required by directive to ensure that policies reflect gender perspectives. Gender mainstreaming policies and action plans have been developed for a range of sectoral areas. A number of developed countries have identified the elimination of discrimination against women as a priority area in their foreign policy.

270. While in many countries, responsibility for gender mainstreaming is assigned to line ministries, national machineries for gender equality often retain responsibility for coordination and monitoring, and for building capacity of staff to undertake gender analysis.

271. The availability of gender mainstreaming tools, including guidelines, checklists and manuals, as well as guidance for conducting gender impact assessments, has been increased. Specialized training, workshops and seminars are provided for staff in different ministries and government agencies, including for senior managers. Little information is, however, available about the quality or impact of such training.

272. Gender-responsive budgeting has emerged as an important gender mainstreaming tool to ensure a more equitable allocation of resources for women and men. Practical tools and guidelines have been developed and some ministries of finance have issued directives or guidelines on gender-sensitive budgeting. Capacity-building and training workshops on gender-responsive budgeting have been organized for staff in ministries of finance and other government ministries and agencies.

273. Specific national legislative and policy frameworks on gender equality are in place or have been enhanced in a growing number of countries as illustrated in greater detail in other sections of this chapter. New legislation has been passed to eliminate de jure discrimination, or laws reviewed to make them more gender sensitive. In some countries, comprehensive gender equality acts have been adopted to serve as the framework for the promotion of gender equality and to align domestic legislation with international standards and obligations. Such legislation and policies serve as the basis for all government agencies and bodies to promote gender equality.

274. New, or revised policies, strategies and actions plans have been developed in priority areas, such as violence against women, trafficking in human beings or equal opportunities. A growing number of countries have in place action plans on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Such action plans aim to translate policies into concrete actions, and contain timelines, benchmarks and indicators to measure progress in implementation.

Greater efforts to collect data disaggregated by sex and use gender-sensitive indicators

275. The collection of data disaggregated by sex and development of gender-sensitive indicators to support policy development, monitoring and evaluation has steadily expanded. The Millennium Development Goals, with their measurable targets and indicators, have further encouraged the collection of data disaggregated by sex. While improved data are available in a number of areas, including employment and education, data availability in other areas remains unreliable and not comparable over time, for example, on poverty and violence against women. The recent approval, by the United Nations Statistical Commission, of an interim set of indicators on violence against women (2009) is an important step forward in improving data collection. The United Nations publication *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*, prepared every five years, continued to provide a global overview of available data on gender equality.

276. National machineries for gender equality as well as other stakeholders are increasingly advocating for the collection of data disaggregated by sex and use of gender-sensitive indicators. Emphasis is being placed on more systematic disaggregation of all collected data, and on the conduct of specialized surveys, such as time-use, violence against women, and health surveys. Data on the participation of women, compared to men, are becoming more regularly available in a number of areas, such as politics and the security sector, including on publicly accessible databases. Many countries issued specialized publications on gender statistics, and data disaggregated by sex were included in key publications. Strengthened cooperation between users and producers of statistics, in particular national statistical offices, is increasingly encouraged.

277. Collaboration with universities and research centres, as well as international organizations, to improve data collection has increased. Capacity-development initiatives, such as training workshops and seminars on data collection and analysis, have also been undertaken.

3. Gaps and challenges

278. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality, including national machineries, in many countries lack effective political support and have limited access to key policy and decision-making processes. When there is little support for the promotion of gender equality from the highest level, the potential for effective collaboration between national machineries and other parts of the government is diminished, resulting in slow progress in gender mainstreaming. Where national machineries are seen as having exclusive or main responsibility for gender equality-related work, there is little pressure for action in other sectors of government that should be involved in such work.

279. Detailed information on the functioning, effectiveness, and coordination and collaboration between institutional mechanisms for gender equality remains scarce. While the increased number of mechanisms reflects better understanding of the responsibility of all levels and all branches of government for promoting gender equality and supporting implementation of relevant commitments, clarity about the role and functions of such mechanisms remains inadequate. Some countries indicated that the lack of synergy in the work of existing mechanisms is an obstacle to the efficient promotion of gender equality.

280. Even where political support for gender equality is strong, it is not always matched by resource allocations. The effectiveness of institutional mechanisms in many countries is constrained by inadequate human and financial resources to meet the growing demand for specialized expertise in all areas of public policy, and to fully implement their mandated functions. High staff turnover, limited number of staff and low staff qualifications also continue to hamper the effectiveness of mechanisms. In some developing countries, the reliance of national machineries on funding from external donors poses challenges for the sustainability of the work on gender equality. Some countries were concerned about the potential that the current economic and financial crisis would negatively affect funding for institutional mechanisms.

281. In many countries, capacity for undertaking gender analysis and for effectively integrating gender perspectives in policies, plans and programmes remains weak. Although measures have been taken to support and strengthen the technical capacity of staff in national machineries for the advancement of women and of gender focal points in line ministries, the effectiveness of their work remains inconsistent, and some countries indicated that the roles and functions of gender focal points needed to be better defined. There is still insufficient training and guidance available on gender equality and in particular on gender mainstreaming, and the quality and impact of capacity-development activities and of results achieved are rarely evaluated. Some countries are also concerned that lack of expertise in new areas, such as gender-responsive budgeting, has hindered progress, and its systematic application has been constrained by lack of knowledge and expertise.

282. While there has been some progress in collecting data disaggregated by sex and developing gender-sensitive indicators, gaps persist. Data collection has been

hampered by methodological challenges, as well as the costs of collection methods. Some countries noted the challenge in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the absence of data disaggregated by sex.

283. There is a lack of instruments and tools for monitoring, evaluation and accountability for promotion of gender equality. While such tools and instruments are becoming more widely available in some countries, others have noted constraints in developing and using them.

I. Human rights of women

1. Introduction

284. Since 1995, action has intensified on the promotion, the protection and the realization of the human rights of women. The year 2009 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which remains central to efforts aimed at securing the human rights of women in all spheres. With 186 States parties as of December 2009, the Convention is the second most ratified international human rights instrument. The Optional Protocol to the Convention[80] offers international recourse against violations of women's human rights under its individual complaints and inquiry procedures. The number of States parties to the Optional Protocol, which totalled 99 as of December 2009, is steadily increasing.

285. The human rights of women are also addressed by human rights treaty bodies established under other international human rights treaties in their general comments and concluding observations. Policy instruments, such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000[81] and the 2005 World Summit Outcome 2005,[17] have included the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as central commitments.

286. The Human Rights Council, established in 2006 by the General Assembly,[82] has strengthened work on the promotion and protection of women's human rights. It has adopted a number of resolutions[83] and held dedicated annual panel discussions on the human rights of women and the elimination of discrimination against women, as well as on the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the Council. The Council has reviewed the situation of women's human rights in countries considered under the universal periodic review and specific recommendations to enhance the protection of women's human rights have been addressed to Member States.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

287. The further development of the global legal and policy frameworks has been accompanied by continued attention to the human rights of women at the national level. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has increasingly been used as a framework for such action. A review of

[80] See General Assembly resolution 54/5, annex.
[81] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.
[82] See General Assembly resolution 60/251.
[83] See Human Rights Council resolutions 6/30, 11/8 and 12/17.

measures taken by Member States reveals two main trends: (a) increased attention to achieving women's de jure equality; and (b) sustained work towards the practical realization of women's rights.

Increased attention to achieving women's de jure equality

288. A legal framework that consistently promotes and protects women's human rights is critical to the enjoyment by women of their rights. Progress has been made by States in carrying out legal reforms, thereby enhancing de jure equality between women and men.

289. The principle of equality between women and men and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex is increasingly included in national constitutions and/or equal opportunities and gender equality legislation. A growing number of laws incorporate a definition of discrimination against women in accordance with article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which prohibits direct and indirect discrimination. Women's human rights, including their economic and social rights, are progressively being incorporated into national constitutions. Laws and regulations on the equal rights of women and men are being adopted by state and municipal bodies within countries.

290. A number of States have introduced temporary special measures in national legal frameworks to accelerate the achievement of equality between women and men, in particular in the political and public spheres. Laws have provided for quotas, numerical goals and other types of temporary special measures aimed at ensuring equal representation of women at different levels of elected office, in political parties and in Government, including the civil service, police and the military. Some countries have adopted laws to enhance women's representation in the judiciary and in diplomatic service.

291. States have focused substantially on legal reforms in relation to penal codes and criminal procedure, particularly with respect to violence against women. States are continuing to eliminate discriminatory provisions in such laws and incorporate new provisions to ensure the protection of women's human rights throughout the criminal justice system.

292. Another area of focus has been the adoption of laws to address discrimination in the workplace. Many countries have enacted new labour codes or equal opportunity employment acts that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and provide for equal opportunities between women and men in employment. These laws include provisions on equal pay for work of equal value, equal rights to pension and other benefits, the participation of women in collective bargaining processes and temporary special measures to overcome women's inequality in employment. Provisions to protect women against discrimination in the workplace, including sexual harassment, have also been included in the laws of a number of countries. States, particularly in Europe and North America, are enhancing maternity and parental leave opportunities. Many States are adopting measures to better reconcile work and family responsibilities for women and men, including flexible working arrangements. A number of countries in different regions have strengthened laws to protect the rights of women domestic workers.

293. A growing number of States have amended laws, including civil, family and personal status laws, to eliminate discrimination against women in the private

sphere, including within the family. Several States have repealed discriminatory provisions relating to the minimum age of marriage for women and men. States have also adopted provisions ensuring equality of rights and responsibilities between women and men with regard to the family and equality with respect to the dissolution of marriage. A number of States in Western Asia have adopted laws to establish alimony funds for women. Some States have extended equality provisions to common-law unions. Legislation enabling same-sex marriages has also been enacted in a few countries. Citizenship and nationality acts continue to be amended to guarantee women equal rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and to confer their nationality to their children. Several States have improved laws to facilitate the registration of birth certificates and the issuance of national identification cards to assist, in particular women and girls, with school enrolments and entitlements to social services. Member States, in particular in Africa, have continued to revise laws to enshrine women's equal rights to use, own and inherit property. Reforms have also been carried out to ensure the equal rights of women to enter into contracts, institute legal proceedings and obtain a passport.

294. Several States have included provisions prohibiting discrimination against women and/or protecting women's human rights in laws on housing, education, health care, the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, disability and social security entitlements. The adoption of laws or provisions aimed at eliminating discrimination against different groups of women who suffer multiple forms of discrimination, including indigenous, migrant, refugee and older women, as well as women with disabilities and single mothers, is an emerging trend. Since 2005, a number of countries in Asia and the Pacific have adopted laws providing targeted support and assistance for particular groups of women. A growing number of countries are also adopting guidelines to ensure gender-sensitive asylum procedures.

295. In several countries, parliamentary committees on human rights and/or gender equality supported the adoption of gender equality legislation and the incorporation of international human rights standards in national legislation. Some States have established national law reform commissions and other institutions to review laws and propose reforms to discriminatory legislation and provisions. Guidelines for conducting gender analysis of draft laws are increasingly being adopted. The promotion of legal reform processes, which include the involvement of multiple stakeholders, is a promising development in many States. Reports on the effectiveness and impact of gender equality and/or equal opportunities legislation are increasingly being considered by legislatures.

Sustained work towards the practical realization of women's rights

296. Equality before the law requires that laws be given full effect. Legislative advancements are supported in many countries by policies, mechanisms and other measures aimed at the practical realization of women's human rights. States have recognized the importance of national action plans or strategies for promoting women's human rights. Such plans ensure coordinated and multisectoral action in a number of different areas, including in education, health, decision-making and employment. A number of States have adopted second or third national action plans on gender equality that include a focus on women's human rights and have devoted attention to the rights of specific groups of women and strengthened evaluation and monitoring measures. National strategies dedicated to the defence of women's human rights within the criminal justice system have been adopted by a few

Member States. The inclusion of measurable goals and timetables in such plans is a promising trend.

297. National action plans provide a framework for the implementation of obligations under international human rights instruments. In a number of countries, these plans address the human rights of women within the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has been used to develop benchmarks and indicators for the implementation of several plans. A number of States have increased budgetary allocations to implement national plans and ensure the sustainability of projects to support the realization of women's human rights. Plans to promote women's rights have also been developed at state and municipal levels in some countries. The promotion of women's rights is increasingly being recognized as an explicit component of national plans on other issues, including those on sustainable development, health and HIV/AIDS.

298. States have established a range of mechanisms and institutions to promote gender equality with a focus on the realization of the equal rights of women and men. These include new ministries, inter-ministerial commissions, multisectoral task forces and national networks of municipal officers and gender focal points. A number of States undertake women's rights audits to assess the impact of laws, policies and programmes and develop recommendations for addressing shortcomings. Observatories to oversee the implementation of equal opportunities or gender equality legislation are increasingly being established. National machineries have used the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to develop plans and address gaps in the implementation of the Convention.

299. Many countries have enhanced the mandate of national human rights institutions to include a focus on women's rights. National human rights institutions are receiving more complaints dealing with discrimination on the basis of sex. In several countries, national human rights institutions have been specifically mandated to carry out awareness-raising campaigns and programmes to promote women's human rights.

300. Legal aid programmes have been confirmed as an important means to ensure access to justice for women facing obstacles in accessing courts and redress for violations of their rights. The development of targeted legal aid programmes reaching out to specific groups of women is an emerging trend. Many countries have established complaints mechanisms and hotlines for women facing discrimination. Specialized courts dealing with family matters or violence against women are also increasingly being established in order to ensure that dedicated personnel are available to adjudicate these matters, enhance efficiency and improve case outcomes.

301. The judiciary has a key role in promoting and ensuring respect for women's rights. Courts, including constitutional and other high-level courts, are increasingly referring to international human rights standards, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Jurisprudence upholding the human rights of women in cases dealing with violence against women, inheritance, employment and other areas is developing in many countries. The number of groups or associations of judges committed to the promotion of equality between women and men and the elimination of discrimination against

women is increasing. A number of countries are taking steps to strengthen the judicial branch and ensure access to justice for women.

302. Training programmes to sensitize public officials to women's human rights and ensure an adequate response to discrimination against women have increased and become more systematic. Such programmes have highlighted international human rights standards and the national constitutional and legislative frameworks in place on women's rights and non-discrimination. Manuals and guidelines on human rights principles and non-discrimination have been developed for civil servants, judges, police and others. Training activities on women's human rights for unions, non-governmental organizations and professional groups are also becoming more common.

303. Educating girls and boys and women and men about women's human rights is key to counteracting attitudes and behaviour that perpetuate discrimination against women and the violation of women's rights. Many States have integrated education on human rights, in particular women's human rights, into school and university curricula and teacher training programmes. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child[84] have been incorporated into educational curricula in some States. Specific programmes to enrich school libraries with materials on the human rights of women have also been implemented. Targeted programmes aimed at ensuring that women from different cultural and religious backgrounds have access to human rights education have been carried out in a number of States. Human rights resource centres are increasingly being established.

304. Numerous States have carried out national campaigns to raise awareness of, and support for, women's human rights. Awareness-raising campaigns have been aimed at challenging gender stereotypes that contribute to discriminatory attitudes about the role of women in the family and society. The use of electronic, print, audio, cartoon and other media have made human rights materials, including the text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Platform for Action, more widely accessible. More countries are translating these materials into local languages and producing them in easy-to-understand formats. A number of States have organized nationwide tours to raise awareness of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Men and boys are increasingly taking part in efforts to tackle discrimination against women and to promote women's human rights.

305. Specific efforts have been directed at empowering women to exercise their rights under national laws. In a few countries, legal literacy campaigns on women's human rights are undertaken on an ongoing basis. Efforts have targeted different groups of women, including migrant and indigenous women and women with disabilities. Some of these efforts are being undertaken in the context of national integration strategies.

306. Multisectoral collaboration has been recognized as a critical aspect in ensuring coherent and consistent action towards the practical realization of women's human rights. Government and non-governmental actors are increasingly collaborating in legal and policy reform processes, in task forces and other mechanisms, and in training and awareness-raising activities at national and local levels, including

[84] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

workshops, seminars and conferences on women's rights. The involvement of line ministries in the elaboration and presentation of national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is a promising trend. Governments are also more systematically involving civil society in reporting under the Convention and in follow up to the concluding observations of the Committee. In several countries, the concluding observations are routinely presented to the legislature and line ministries. Numerous States regard human rights in general, and women's rights in particular, as important cross-cutting issues in foreign policy, and they cooperate in bilateral and/or multilateral projects to promote women's human rights.

3. Gaps and challenges

307. Women's de jure and de facto equality has not been achieved in any country in the world. Discrimination against women continues in law and in practice, with many women suffering multiple forms of discrimination and limited access to rights, resources and opportunities.

308. Efforts to fully incorporate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into domestic law have not received adequate attention in many States. The significant number of reservations to the Convention remains problematic, particularly those to articles 2 and 16, which the Committee considers to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. Such reservations constitute an obstacle to the realization of women's human rights.

309. Despite advances in promoting women's human rights in legal frameworks, discriminatory laws and gaps in legislation persist in numerous countries, leaving women without protection or legal basis to claim their rights. In a number of countries, such discriminatory provisions continue, in particular, in family, divorce and personal laws, penal codes, nationality laws and laws relating to inheritance and ownership of land and property. The coexistence of multiple legal systems, with discriminatory customary and religious laws and practice prevailing, remains a source of concern in several countries. Draft legislation on gender equality and women's human rights remains pending in a number of States, owing to delays in adoption.

310. Even where legal reforms have taken place, laws are often ineffectively enforced and public officials remain unaware of the laws and their duties to implement them. Many women continue to lack awareness of their rights and the procedures by which to commence legal proceedings, are not empowered to claim their rights and continue to distrust mechanisms of redress. The cost of redress mechanisms and delays in rendering decisions also continue to constitute obstacles. Particular groups of women, such as migrant or indigenous women, remain especially marginalized from the formal legal system.

311. National action plans and strategies often do not reflect the full scope of the Convention and the Platform for Action, and they do not provide appropriate implementation or monitoring mechanisms. States continue to face challenges promoting coherent rights-based approaches to gender equality at all levels of Government.

312. The persistence of stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, which often entrench

the subordinate position of women, continues to be a significant challenge to the practical realization of women's human rights.

J. Women and the media

1. Introduction

313. The Platform for Action recognized the substantial potential of the media to contribute to the empowerment of women. The role of the media was highlighted throughout the critical areas of concern and was also the focus of a specific critical area of concern, with two strategic objectives: to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication; and to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

314. In the outcome document of its twenty-third special session,[16] the General Assembly called for action and initiatives to promote equal access for women and men as users and producers of ICT; and to encourage the media and the information industry, consistent with freedom of expression, to adopt, or develop further, codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self-regulatory guidelines to remove gender stereotypes. It also called for capacity-building programmes that support women's networking, and for improving global information-sharing on gender equality, development and peace, through ICT.

315. At its forty-seventh session held in 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on participation in and access of women to the media, and ICT and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.[85]

316. These commitments were consolidated and further elaborated through the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, in Geneva and Tunis. The Declaration of Principles, adopted in 2003, committed to women's empowerment through ICT,[86] and the Tunis Commitment, adopted in 2005, recognized a gender divide within the digital divide, and committed to women's empowerment and the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in ICT policies and programmes.[87]

317. Since 2005, the General Assembly has reiterated the importance of media and ICT in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In its resolution 62/136 on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, the Assembly stressed the need to identify the best practices for ensuring that rural women have access to and full participation in ICT, to address the priorities and needs of rural women and girls as active users of information and to ensure their participation in developing and implementing global, regional and national ICT strategies.[88] In its resolution 62/206, on women in development, the Assembly reaffirmed that equal access to education and training at all levels, including in particular in ICT, are essential for gender equality, the empowerment of women and poverty eradication and to allow women's full and equal contribution to, and equal

[85] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/44.

[86] See International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E, 12 December 2003.

[87] See ITU Document WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-E, 18 November 2005.

[88] See General Assembly resolution 62/136, para. 5.

opportunity to benefit from, development.[89] The General Assembly further urged States, in its resolution 63/155 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, to include in their national plans information campaigns to eliminate gender stereotypes in the media that lead to violence against women and girls.[90]

318. Building on its earlier work, the Commission has called for actions in relation to the media and ICT in a number of its agreed conclusions since 2005, including its agreed conclusions on enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work; the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels; the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child; and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS.[91] The Commission recognized that unequal access to and control over ICT is a challenge to the creation of an enabling environment to enhance women's participation in and benefit from development processes, and urged Governments and other actors as appropriate, to increase women's and girls' equal and effective access to and use of ICT.[92] In its resolutions 51/3 on forced marriage of the girl child and 52/2 on ending female genital mutilation, the Commission called for training for the media and for advocacy and awareness-raising activities, including campaigns to address these practices.

2. Trends in national-level implementation

319. The world has witnessed a dynamic process of expansion of media channels and ICT. Although women's participation has increased in the media sector, including at decision-making and management levels, and women have increased their access to, and use of, media and ICT, parity has yet to be reached and pervasive gender stereotypes persist.

320. Trends in implementation at the national level that emerged after the adoption of the Platform for Action have been further reinforced since the review and appraisal conducted in 2005. Responses from Governments indicate that the media has been increasingly used as an instrument to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and efforts have been made to reduce gender stereotypes and discrimination against women in and through the media and ICT. A review of measures taken by Member States in all regions reveals the following trends: (a) continued measures to increase women's participation in the media; (b) increased awareness-raising on gender equality for media stakeholders; (c) strengthened efforts to enhance women's access to, and use of, the media and ICT; (d) continued actions to address gender stereotypes in the media; and (e) promotion of increased attention in the media and ICT to critical topics affecting women and girls.

[89] See General Assembly resolution 62/206, twelfth preambular paragraph.
[90] See General Assembly resolution 63/155, para. 16 (a).
[91] See E/2006/27, E/2007/27 and E/2009/27.
[92] See E/2006/27.

Continued measures to increase women's participation in the media

321. Increased numbers of women participating in the media sector, particularly at decision-making levels, is critical for ensuring more inclusive and gender-sensitive media. While global statistics on women's employment in the media, particularly in decision-making positions, are not readily available, data collected by the Global Media Monitoring Project[93] in 2005 from 76 countries demonstrated evidence of progress in some areas.[94] The proportion of women reporters, for example, increased from 28 per cent in 1995 to 38 per cent in 2005 across all media types. Between 2000 and 2005, the share of women reporters increased from 36 to 42 per cent in television, from 28 to 45 per cent in radio and from 26 to 29 per cent in newspapers. In the same period, the share of women reporting on the economy rose from 35 to 43 per cent, and on politics and government from 26 to 32 per cent.[93]

322. Member States reported on actions taken, and some achievements, in efforts to increase women's participation across all media. For example, more women were working in the media sector in Africa, including at decision-making and management levels, in both private and public media institutions. According to data provided by a number of States in Europe, Africa and Asia, women's share of employment in the media ranged from 20 to 43 per cent, with a high of 55 per cent and 67 per cent of women employed in the print media and as television journalists, respectively. States reported that women had been appointed to high-ranking positions, including as director of a national television company, director-general of media and communications at cabinet level, head of an official national news agency, minister of culture and information, media adviser to a head of state, and head of a national communication council.

323. Legislative and policy development is critical for increasing women's participation in the media. A number of Governments have reviewed and developed legislation to facilitate the removal of barriers to women's participation. Bills on radio and television broadcasting have, for example, expressly promoted the principle of equality between women and men.

324. Other innovative strategies are required to promote women's participation in decision-making in the media. To increase access to women candidates for senior-level positions, for example, a database of women with expertise in different fields was developed by a public authority with the direct involvement of media professionals to ensure its systematic and effective use.

Increased awareness-raising on gender equality for media stakeholders

325. Sensitization of media stakeholders on gender equality and women's human rights has the potential to significantly influence both the extent of coverage of women and gender equality issues and the nature of the portrayal of women and girls in the media. Strategies and action plans have been put in place in all regions to sensitize the media industry by, for example, incorporating a gender perspective

[93] See Global Media Monitoring Project, *2005 Global Report: Who Makes the News?* (www.whomakesthenews.org/who_makes_the_news/report_2005).

[94] This civil society initiative reviews the news on one specific day at five-year intervals and involves hundreds of organizations, including gender and media activists and NGOs, students, academics, trade associations and church groups. A revised version of the Global Monitoring Project is expected in 2010.

in media studies at universities and media training institutions to make the media more proactive in its efforts to raise gender equality issues. Training seminars and round-table discussions have encouraged networking on gender equality issues among policymakers, media practitioners and public relations experts.

326. Research has also increasingly been carried out on gender equality and the media, including on the portrayal of female politicians in the media.

327. Government institutions in a number of countries, including national mechanisms for gender equality, worked with community organizations and the local media to design and implement strategies to promote gender equality. Women's media associations have played a key role in these efforts, particularly in Africa. Examples of activities undertaken have included the establishment of a newspaper on women and leadership and the production of television programmes on women's empowerment.

328. The importance of measures to recognize and award achievements in promoting gender equality, and to ensure a balanced and realistic portrayal of women and girls in the media, has been increasingly acknowledged. Awards and prizes have been established to promote programmes that address gender equality issues and to recognize and encourage film directors and journalists to promote gender equality through their work, including coverage of women's human rights.

Strengthened efforts to enhance women's access to and use of the media and ICT

329. Little data exists on women's access to ICT, including, for example, mobile phones. It has been noted, however, that mobile phones, when available, have proven to be empowering tools for women, facilitating their access to a diverse range of important information and services, such as banking services, market prices of crops or other produce, and information on agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS and other relevant areas.[95]

330. In addition to gender-sensitive policies and legislation, a diverse range of programmatic action is important for increasing women's access to the media and ICT. Measures have included the design and implementation of projects in rural areas to increase women's access to the radio and television programmes and support for the creation of women's media outlets.

331. Global advances in ICT have created significant potential for facilitating women's economic empowerment, for example, through the acquisition of new skills and access to employment opportunities. Realizing this potential requires efforts to increase women's access to, and effective use of such technology. The creation of tele-centres in rural areas in many countries has increased women's potential to access traditional as well as new ICT. Efforts are needed, however, to ensure that women have equal access to such facilities, taking into account factors such as location, opening times and security issues.

332. The development of skills in ICT has become indispensable for women's ability to participate and compete in markets at all levels. In this regard, ICT training programmes have been organized and information technology equipment

[95] Kathambi Kinoti (2008), "Mobile phone telephony's promise of bridging the digital divide" (see www.awid.org.eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/Mobile-telephony-s-promise-of-bridging-the-digital-divide).

procured for women entrepreneurs to increase their access to markets. E-training courses have been developed for women to improve the competencies and skills they need to secure employment. In some cases, vocational training has also increased women's access to employment within the ICT sector.

333. Innovative efforts have been made to broaden women's use of ICT. For example, training in computer literacy has been offered to women elected officials, including new members of parliament, in a number of countries, thereby facilitating more direct and efficient links among women politicians and between politicians and their constituencies.

Continued actions to address gender stereotypes in the media

334. The need to change persisting gender stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men in society is broadly recognized. It is also increasingly acknowledged that media is an essential tool in this regard because of its wide reach and influence. Responses show that measures have been taken in all regions to encourage the media to play an active role in promoting gender equality and portraying women and girls in a more balanced manner. Activities undertaken have included research on the portrayal of women in media programming and advertising by academic institutions, women's organizations and other civil society organizations, some with the support of national machineries; advocacy for gender-sensitive programmes; the establishment of regulations, codes of conduct, and in some cases legislation, as well as the establishment of complaint and monitoring mechanisms.

335. Legislative action has been taken in a number of countries to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the portrayal of women in the media, including through prohibiting or restricting discriminatory advertising materials or information that is demeaning to women. Some legislation has also required the media to raise awareness of gender equality in their programming. Laws have targeted, for example, programmes or advertisements that present one sex as predominantly prevailing or as subordinate, or that are of a pornographic nature. Legislation has proscribed stereotypical remarks in public electronic communications or other means of publication, and in some cases the impact of legislation has been reinforced through sanctions.

336. In recent years, a number of States in Asia and Europe have developed broadcasting industry codes and guidelines to address discriminatory media content. Broadcasters have been advised to avoid placing inappropriate emphasis on physical characteristics related to sex and encouraged to increase coverage of women's achievements in areas such as sports.

337. Governments have developed partnerships with the media and civil society organizations to ensure that programming does not encourage gender stereotyping or discrimination against women, including in relation to violence against women. In a number of countries, women's groups and networks and other non-governmental organizations have been involved in monitoring the media.

338. The need to provide guidance and support to the education system on addressing the role of media in the persistence of gender stereotypes has been increasingly recognized. Educational tools have been developed and, in some countries, teachers have been provided with a wide range of media materials for classroom use. Media teaching kits have been designed to make young people

conscious of gender stereotypes and to heighten their awareness of the benefits of a gender-equal society.

339. Capacity development for journalists has been identified as an essential tool to combat gender stereotypes and discrimination against women. A range of training programmes have been developed, such as for journalists in gender-sensitive interviewing techniques, script and scenario writing and commentary. Training has also included support for gender-sensitive reporting on issues concerning women's human rights, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and rape and other forms of violence, including violence against women in armed conflict.

Promotion of increased attention in the media and ICT to critical topics affecting women and girls

340. The importance of the media and ICT in promoting and protecting women's human rights, supporting their empowerment and increasing awareness and acceptance of their leadership roles in society is widely recognized. Gender-sensitive media coverage is essential to increasing visibility of, and promoting public dialogue on, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Efforts have been made to encourage newspapers, magazines, radio and television to expand their coverage of these issues.

341. Particularly noteworthy has been the upsurge in the attention to violence against women in the media, including through mass media campaigns across regions. Governments reported more effective use of traditional media, and in some cases ICT, to raise awareness and change attitudes on different forms of violence, including domestic violence, early marriage, rape, sexual violence and trafficking of women and girls. The media has been effectively engaged in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaigns in countries across all regions.

342. Increasingly, the potential of ICT has been effectively harnessed in efforts to address violence against women. Websites have been created; online counselling services have been established to handle cases of domestic violence and sexual harassment; and hotlines have been set up to address, inter alia, the risk of trafficking in women and girls.

343. A number of countries, in particular in Africa, utilized gender-sensitive radio broadcasting, sometimes supported by women's media networks, to promote the empowerment of women, provide a gender perspective on current affairs, connect women to each other and place issues that have been taboo, such as violence against women, at the heart of public debates.

344. Reported coverage of gender equality issues in the media through documentaries, public service announcements and film clips has included the representation of women in political and public life, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, refugees and women and health. Media campaigns have also highlighted gender stereotypes in education, the media and in advertising, as well as the unequal sharing of family responsibilities.

3. Gaps and challenges

345. It is difficult to provide a clear global overview of women's current participation in the media and ICT sectors due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data

and gender-specific indicators. Reliable and comparable data on women's access to and use of ICT are particularly limited.

346. While women are increasingly employed in the media, including at the senior level, they have not yet attained equality in terms of holding decision-making positions in the media industry, for example in advisory, management, regulatory and monitoring bodies.

347. The lack of gender-sensitive policies in the media has contributed to employment inequalities between men and women. Women journalists do not enjoy equal status with their male colleagues; they generally earn less and are more frequently employed on a part-time basis. In addition, the topics men and women journalists cover continue to differ in a manner consistent with persistent gender stereotypes on the roles of women and men.

348. Even when the availability of ICT has improved, women do not have equal access, in particular in rural areas. Resource shortages, high illiteracy rates, language barriers, physical inaccessibility of public access centres for ICT and cybercafés, including inconvenient opening times and unsafe environments,[96] and lack of relevant content continue to prevent women in many countries from benefiting from the potential of information and communications technology, including the Internet.

349. Overall, media coverage of gender equality issues in most countries has remained limited. Media continues to inadequately reflect women's roles and contributions to society and women are often portrayed in a stereotyped manner — as victims, sex objects, economically and emotionally dependant, and weak, passive and unprofessional. Men predominate in media coverage in most areas, including, in particular, in politics, the economy and sports. Biased news coverage in both traditional and new media has reinforced gender stereotypes by depicting a world in which women and girls are relatively invisible. Stereotyped portrayals of women in the media, particularly in advertising, have remained a serious challenge in many countries.

350. Advances in the reach of ICT have also facilitated the spreading of negative images of women, prejudices and stereotyped attitudes towards women. Women are often portrayed in a negative light on the Internet. The use of ICT in perpetrating violence against women and girls must be urgently addressed.

K. Women and the environment

1. Introduction

351. The Platform for Action noted the linkages between gender equality and sustainable development. It promoted the involvement of women in environmental decision-making at all levels, the integration of gender perspectives in the policies and programmes for sustainable development, and the strengthening or establishment of mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

[96] See A/64/93, para. 214.

352. In its 2008 agreed conclusions on financing gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Commission on the Status of Women called upon Member States and the international community to integrate a gender perspective into national environmental policies and to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies related to the impact of climate change on the lives of women and girls.[97] In its 2009 agreed conclusions on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, the Commission called on Member States to integrate women, on an equal basis with men, in decision-making regarding sustainable resource management and the development of policies and programmes for sustainable development.[98]

353. Although combating climate change has become an international priority, little attention has been paid to the gender equality dimensions of this issue. In 2008, however, the Commission decided to focus on the gender perspectives of climate change as the emerging issue at its annual session. A panel of experts recognized that climate change was not a gender-neutral phenomenon and highlighted many of its gender-specific impacts, particularly as they affect poor women. The panel noted that women demonstrated unique knowledge and expertise in developing strategies and leading efforts to combat the effects of climate change, as well as in natural disaster management, at the grass-roots level. Women played a critical leadership role in community revitalization and natural resource management. Overall, however, women tended to be underrepresented in decision-making on sustainable development, including on climate change, which impeded their ability to contribute their unique and valuable perspectives and expertise on the issue.[99]

354. In 2007, as part of its focus on the situation of women in rural areas, the General Assembly highlighted the need to integrate gender equality perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; and strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impacts of development and environmental policies on women.[100]

355. In 2007, the Commission on Sustainable Development called on Governments to mainstream gender considerations, in particular the role of women in management and decision-making, at all levels, which is crucial for the implementation of the interlinked issues of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.[101]

356. In 2009, the Commission on Sustainable Development recognized that successful sustainable rural development depended on the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies related to climate change, drought, desertification and natural disasters. Recommended actions included measures to ensure equitable access to land, water, financial resources and technologies by women; promote the participation of local communities, including women, in mitigating the effects of drought and combating desertification and land degradation; build the capacity of affected communities to address the impacts of

[97] See E/2008/27.

[98] See E/2009/27.

[99] See moderator's summary, "Gender perspectives on climate change", fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, United Nations (New York, 2008).

[100] See General Assembly resolution 62/136.

[101] See E/2007/29.

desertification; and increase investments in training, research and development on sustainable practices and technologies, and accelerate the transfer and diffusion of such technologies, information, methods and practices to reach all users, including women, farmers, indigenous people and those in remote areas.[102]

2. Trends in national-level implementation

357. While there was a growing understanding of the links between gender equality and sustainable development, only a few countries reported on specific actions on the implementation of this critical area of concern. Actions taken appear to have been very uneven across regions. Major trends in implementation at the national level identified in the responses received include: (a) strengthening institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender perspectives in the environmental sector; (b) strengthening the participation of women in environmental decision-making processes; (c) increasing capacity to promote gender-sensitive sustainable development policies and programmes; (d) addressing the constraints women face in obtaining equal access to natural resources; and (e) increasing commitments to address the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women.

Strengthening institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender perspectives in the environmental sector

358. Institutional mechanisms were developed to support the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the environment sector. Relevant ministries, such as those of the environment, agriculture, water and forestry, set up women's units and gender equality task forces and programmes at the national level and, in some instances, also at the subregional level. Inter-agency committees were created to coordinate efforts across different ministries. Actions taken included the analysis of the linkages between gender equality and the environment, the integration of gender perspectives into environmental policies and programmes, the development of gender-sensitive monitoring systems and indicators and the assessment of the impact of such efforts.

359. Countries developed different approaches to link gender equality and the environment in national action plans and strategies. Some national action plans on gender equality included specific sections on the environment, natural resources and agriculture. National action plans on sustainable development and the environment increasingly integrated gender-sensitive strategies, actions and indicators. Some of these plans explicitly recognized that women play an essential role in the management of natural resources and promoted specific actions to ensure women's participation in environmental protection measures. A few countries identified gender and environment, together with other key issues, as core areas to be mainstreamed in all sector programmes.

360. In some national machineries on gender equality, special units on sustainable development, environment and agriculture were established to assist in the development and implementation of gender-sensitive environmental policies and programmes with explicit objectives, targets and implementation strategies; create gender-sensitive monitoring and assessment systems; and encourage the active

[102] See E/2009/29.

involvement of women in decision-making processes. Training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns were also launched.

Strengthening the participation of women in environmental decision-making processes

361. Member States recognized the importance of enhancing the participation of women in environmental decision-making and sustainable development processes. A number of countries noted that women headed ministries of environment. Some efforts were made to increase the number of women within the relevant ministries.

362. The recognition of women's role in natural resource management also resulted in their increased participation in environmental decision-making processes at local levels, for example, in municipal water boards and other resource management bodies within communities.

363. Countries reported the increased participation of women in civil society organizations that promote the sound management of natural resources such as forests, water, land and other resources while ensuring that women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability are taken into account. Ministries of environment fostered regular exchanges with environmental and women's organizations and networks that identify and address gender equality perspectives in environmental protection and sustainable development.

Increasing capacity to promote gender-sensitive sustainable development policies and programmes

364. Training programmes were provided for staff in the environment, agricultural and other relevant sectors, including through national machineries on gender equality. The education sector in some countries was also encouraged to increase its focus on environmental issues within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), including through development of a national educational programme in cooperation with relevant ministries. Community education and awareness programmes on post-disaster recovery processes were developed to build community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

365. Seminars, studies, handbooks and publications were used to promote awareness of the gender perspectives of sustainable development. Materials were developed and translated into local languages to make them available to local communities.

366. International days on food security and the environment, such as World Food Day and World Environment Day, were used as a context in which to promote awareness of the gender-specific impact of environmental degradation and the need for gender-sensitive interventions.

367. Research was undertaken to identify the gender equality perspectives on natural resource management and environmental issues and develop appropriate responses. In the context of sectoral development plans, gender-sensitive research was promoted in the areas of agriculture, technology development, agricultural training and sustainable natural resource management. The gender-specific impact of environmental degradation, including the health risks of certain pollutants on

women, was assessed and the research results used to develop specific preventive measures and conduct further research.

368. Some Member States supported the development of sex-disaggregated data and indicators to monitor the use and management of natural resources and other relevant environmental indicators from a gender perspective. National reports have been prepared on gender and the environment.

369. Efforts to increase the capacity for gender-sensitive sustainable development policies and programmes also included activities aimed at increasing women's capacity to act as agents of change. Training programmes on sustainable natural resource management targeted women to enhance their critical role in sustainable agriculture. Capacity development activities also focused on increasing women's awareness of available resources, the protection of the environment and the use of alternative energy sources. Responses to the food and energy crises included training for women on food security and food processing.

370. Governments provided financial support, including through loans and microcredit, to strengthen women's contributions to environmental sustainability in agriculture and natural resource management. Financial support was provided through farmers' associations or microfinance institutions to support environmentally sound entrepreneurial initiatives or to start environmentally sustainable farming and forestry conservation projects in rural areas. Governments also funded projects developed and managed by civil society organizations, including women's organizations, to strengthen community awareness of environmental sustainability issues.

371. Development assistance was utilized to support the participation of women in decision-making on environmental policies. Projects promoting the gender-sensitive management and conservation of natural resources projects, in compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, were also supported.

Addressing the constraints women face in equal access to natural resources

372. Increasingly, the recognition of the linkages between the equal access of women and men to natural resources and the sustainable management, utilization and conservation of natural resources has led to specific actions to identify and address the constraints women face in accessing and controlling resources in different contexts.

373. To enhance women's role in agriculture and their critical contributions to food security, steps were taken to guarantee the equal rights of women and men to acquire, use and transfer land and property, as well as to ensure equal access to agricultural extension services and credit.

374. Ministries invested in research on improved production of high-yield crop varieties and in the development of technologies that respond to the needs of women farmers. Environmental protection activities targeted at women included awareness-raising on farming methods that lead to soil degradation; capacity development on sustainable harvesting techniques, post-harvest processing, and storage and quality control. Such actions improved the lives of rural women and encouraged them to participate in sustainable development initiatives, such as the establishment of environment-friendly farms and enterprises.

375. The rapid decline of marine resources threatens food security and livelihoods in communities where women fish for subsistence and income generation. In some countries, in particular small island States, civil society organizations were supported to safeguard marine areas and promote the implementation of gender-sensitive fisheries programmes, as well as to protect women working in fisheries and fisheries management from unemployment.

376. Governments increasingly recognized women in their roles as users and managers of water for domestic consumption, subsistence agriculture, health and sanitation. Initiatives taken to support women in these roles included training and awareness-raising campaigns for policymakers and technical experts in public and private sectors on the design and implementation of gender-sensitive integrated water management, in particular access to drinking water and sanitation.

377. Women are particularly affected by the lack of affordable access to clean energy. Different stakeholders undertook a range of initiatives to promote the incorporation of gender perspectives into the energy sector and to influence decisions on the use of energy. Alternative energy technologies were provided in some rural areas, including biogas, solar home systems and wind energy. Increasing access to grid and off-grid electrification in rural villages minimized women's workload for grinding grains or pumping water in some areas. Energy-saving measures also included the granting of subsidies on gas for domestic use, the dissemination of improved household stoves, the setting of maximum prices for energy for female-headed households and the provision of special discounts on purchases of energy-saving electronic appliances.

378. In the context of increased recognition of the strategic importance of forests in watershed management, environmental protection, the provision of wood and non-timber resources and as a reserve of biodiversity, there is also greater acknowledgement of the role of women as custodians of forest resources and of their contribution to the transfer of indigenous and traditional knowledge.

Increasing commitment to address the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women

379. In recent years, climate change has become an increasingly central issue in environmental discussions, in particular its negative impact on communities dependent on agriculture, low-lying islands and coastal communities. Women make up a large number of the poor in communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood and are disproportionately vulnerable to, and affected by, climate change. Women in rural areas in developing countries carry most of the responsibility for household water supply and energy for cooking and heating, as well as for food security, and are negatively affected by drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation. Because of their roles, unequal access to resources and limited mobility, women in many contexts are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, such as floods, fires and mudslides. Women's limited access to resources and decision-making processes increases their vulnerability to the impact of climate change.

380. Climate change response strategies included gender-sensitive actions for the mitigation and adaptation of climate change. Some Governments engaged women's organizations and other stakeholders in the development of environmental plans, programmes and activities, with the goal of addressing gender perspectives in

climate change efforts. Women, especially vulnerable and poor women from isolated and rural areas, were targeted through education and awareness-raising efforts in order to minimize the risks and impacts of climate change.

381. Increasingly, Governments promoted actions to mainstream gender perspectives into national disaster management policies, programmes and response efforts. With the support of the United Nations, some developed gender-sensitive projects on disaster preparedness and emergency response. A few environment ministries collaborated with communities and in particular with women to consolidate and implement risk reduction and capacity development strategies for post-disaster recovery processes, as part of efforts to build community resilience.

382. Efforts were made to build women's capacities in sustainable natural resource management and in means of responding to recovery processes in the aftermath of disasters. These projects aimed to meet the specific needs of women and their families in emergencies, in particular with regard to hygiene, sanitation, water treatment and the prevention of sexual violence against displaced persons, particularly women, girls and adolescents.

3. Gaps and challenges

383. While a number of Governments addressed gender perspectives in their national plans or strategies on sustainable development, the environment and rural development, others noted that the implementation of this critical area remains an emerging concern requiring more strategic actions. There is still a broad gap in public awareness of gender-specific perspectives on natural resources management and of the benefits of gender equality for the promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection.

384. Environmental policies and programmes have not taken into account gender differences in access to, and control over, natural resources or the impact of environmental degradation on women and men. Institutions continue to lack the capacity, knowledge and skills to mainstream gender perspectives in sustainable development and natural resource management, and in particular in relation to climate change.

385. Research and sex-disaggregated data on gender equality and the environment remain limited. Gender perspectives are not fully incorporated into environmental impact assessments and other environment monitoring mechanisms.

386. Limited progress has been made in promoting women's participation in environmental decision-making. The underrepresentation or absence of women in high-level decision-making organs in the environment sector has seriously limited women's contributions to environmental policy development, including to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Women's limited access to technical skills, resources and information, in particular in rural areas, has impeded women's effective participation in, and impact on, decision-making on the sustainable development and management of natural resources.

387. Women's critical role in smallholder agriculture and food production is constrained by unequal access to, and control over, productive resources, such as land, property, credit, access to technology and extension services. This situation negatively impacts food security and sustainable livelihoods. Sustainable energy alternatives are often not available to women, in particular poor women.

388. Climate change discussions have not taken gender perspectives into account. International instruments, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[103] and the Kyoto Protocol,[104] do not address the gender-specific aspects of climate change at all.

389. Substantial international assistance, both technical and financial, would be needed to facilitate gender-sensitive assessment and design of appropriate strategies to cope with the gender-specific impacts of climate change in developing countries.

L. The girl child

1. Introduction

390. In the Platform for Action, recognition was given to the particular forms of discrimination against girls and a call was made for targeted action to protect and promote their rights and remove all barriers to the development of their full potential. The General Assembly[105] and the Commission on the Status of Women have continued to build on the Platform and have strengthened the international policy framework. They have further emphasized the need to address all forms of violence against girls in different settings and situations, improve girls' access to basic services, including with regard to education and health, and ensure that girls can express themselves and participate in decision-making processes. The empowerment of girls is critical to breaking the cycle of violence and discrimination against them. The Commission provided comprehensive guidance in its 2007 agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child,[106] as well as in its resolutions on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS,[107] on ending female genital mutilation,[108] and on forced marriage of the girl child.[109]

2. Trends in national-level implementation

391. States have undertaken a range of actions to implement the strategic objectives at the national level, with a particular focus on girls' rights to grow up without violence and with access to basic services, especially education. Four main trends are visible: (a) continued efforts to create a more robust legal and policy framework to protect the rights and well-being of girls; (b) sustained programmatic action to protect the rights of children, including girls, and in some cases with particular emphasis on girls; (c) stronger partnerships between different stakeholders to promote the rights of girls; and (d) fostering a non-discriminatory culture.

[103] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[104] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1.
[105] See General Assembly resolutions 60/141 and 62/140 on the girl child, and 61/144 and 63/156 on trafficking in women and girls.
[106] See E/CN.6/2007/9.
[107] See Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 50/2, 51/1, 52/4 and 53/2.
[108] See Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 51/2 and 52/2.
[109] See Commission on the Status of Women resolution 51/3.

Continued efforts to create a more robust legal and policy framework to protect the rights and well-being of girls

392. The importance of protecting the rights and well-being of children, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[109] which has achieved near-universal ratification, has received steady attention. While stronger legislative and policy frameworks are increasingly in place to uphold children's rights and better respond to their needs, few frameworks specifically address the situation of girls. There have been limited reported efforts to mainstream the concerns of girls in national policies, strategies and action plans on children. Several national gender equality strategies or action plans integrated a focus on the girl child. Where targeted efforts to improve the status of girls have been undertaken, a life cycle approach has often been used to achieve the goal of gender equality.

393. Children in general, including girls, benefit from legislation that protects and promotes their rights. Some countries have enacted or strengthened existing comprehensive children's acts. Others have amended family laws to recognize specific rights of children, such as the right to know both parents and to carry the father's name even when filiation has not been established. Some countries enhanced legal protection for children who work.

394. The urgency to protect children from violence has received unprecedented attention. As documented in the 2006 report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children,[110] multiple forms of violence are perpetrated against children, and especially girls, in settings such as the home, schools and communities. In response, Governments are increasingly adopting laws and policies to address violence. For example, a number of African countries and countries with immigrant communities criminalized female genital mutilation/cutting or amended existing laws to provide for harsher sanctions. In order to protect immigrant girls from this form of violence on return visits to their country of origin, some States introduced extraterritorial legislation. Steps have also been taken to ban the procedure in public health institutions. In addition to legislation, a number of countries developed new or enhanced existing policies, strategies and action plans to combat this practice. Some countries use their national cultural policy as the framework for advocating the rejection of this practice.

395. Some progress has also been reported in addressing early and forced marriage, which is a manifestation of discrimination against girls and a violation of their rights. While some countries enacted laws to prohibit forced marriage or introduced harsher sanctions to prevent this practice, others raised the legal age of marriage to protect girls. In some instances, immigration rules were amended for the same purpose. Implementation of legislation has sometimes been accelerated through policy measures and action plans to combat forced marriage.

396. Improvements in the protection of girls from exploitation and abuse have been achieved, notably in the growing number of countries that have in place legislation to combat sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, including extraterritorial legislation to prosecute nationals engaging in sex tourism. The act of contacting children via the Internet or by other means for the purpose of sexual exploitation is also increasingly being criminalized. Countries continued to enact legislation against trafficking in children and have increased applicable penalties for

[110] See United Nations, *World Report on Violence against Children* (Geneva).

traffickers. Such legislation is sometimes complemented by national action plans to combat the sexual exploitation of children or trafficking in children. While these measures protect all children, girls may especially benefit from them as they are more often the target of such forms of violence and abuse.

397. As indicated in the present report, in the section on violence against women, since 2005 numerous States have amended their legislation on violence against women and girls benefit from the protection of new or amended legislation to criminalize, expand the scope of, or increase penalties for violence and sexual abuse, including in the domestic sphere. Girls may also have benefited from the increasing number of countries, since 2005, that have prohibited corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the home.

398. Availability of data and research on violence against girls increasingly supports policy development and implementation. In addition to general studies on violence against women or children, studies at the national level have also examined different forms of violence against girls, including female genital mutilation/cutting and forced feeding, as well as violence in specific contexts such as educational settings. In some cases, institutional mechanisms dedicated to addressing violence against women explicitly monitor violence against girls.

Sustained programmatic action to protect the rights of children, including girls

399. Programmes and activities are needed to translate legal and policy frameworks into concrete gains for children, including girls. To accelerate progress, Governments have worked to increase awareness of children's rights, for example, by compiling all applicable conventions, legal texts, policies and court decisions into children's codes for judicial personnel and social workers. Child protection laws have been publicized among the general public, and specialized training and manuals have resulted in a better understanding of children's rights among teachers, civil servants and army personnel in a number of countries.

400. The global commitments to achieving universal primary education and gender parity in primary and secondary education have led to expanded programme interventions in many countries (see sect. II.B of the present report). A number of measures aimed at supporting families, especially poor families, in meeting the direct and indirect costs of their children's education were expected to have a beneficial impact on girls' enrolment and retention rates. The abolition of school fees in a number of countries removed an important impediment faced by poor families in sending their daughters to school. The distribution of free textbooks, school supplies and uniforms contributed to expanding access to education for girls, as did school feeding programmes in a number of countries. In one case, the lifting of the requirement for a birth certificate resulted in an increase in girls' enrolment in rural areas.

401. Some countries have complemented these measures with efforts targeting girls only, and have sought to reach specific groups, such as rural, poor or indigenous girls. Measures have been implemented, for example, to eliminate or reduce school fees for girls or to provide take-home food rations only for girls. Some Governments created incentives for families to educate girls by providing scholarships. Governments also carried out awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of educating girls.

402. The increased recognition of the importance of sex and family life education in preventing teenage pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases has led to expanded attention to this subject in educational settings, as part of regular curriculum courses or special programmes. Information on reproductive health is being disseminated through traditional and new channels of communication, such as printed educational material and online youth clinics. Some initiatives facilitate discussion between parents and adolescents. One campaign promoted the shared responsibility of boys and girls in preventing unwanted pregnancies. As early pregnancy continues to force girls to drop out of school, some countries have provided scholarships or childcare support to encourage school-age girls to continue their studies after delivery.

403. Prevention of violence against children has become a priority area in programme interventions by States, in different settings. One country, for example, established youth and family centres to help children and their parents to solve problems without resorting to violence, while another made gender-sensitive materials on preventing violence at school available. Countries also responded to risks posed by the Internet, for example by setting up a pilot project to help young teenagers deal with their increased risk of exposure to paedophilia and pornography.

404. An increasing number of States conducted awareness-raising campaigns to prevent violence against children that included national days, public marches, exhibitions, public service announcements and the creation of websites. Campaigns on the prevention of female genital mutilation/cutting, forced marriage, violence against girls and abusive dating relationships targeted a wide range of stakeholders. In one prevention measure, the topic of forced marriage was included in mandatory language courses for immigrants. Some initiatives targeted boys and aimed to prevent violence by building a more positive male identity, geared towards partnership.

405. In addition to efforts aimed at prevention, there has also been an increase in the response to violence against children, albeit not specifically for girls. Steps have been taken to intervene in cases of violence against children and to improve reporting. Some States have built the capacity of professionals, such as education and health workers, to identify and respond to cases of violence against, or sexual abuse of children. While many countries have established specialized police units for responding to cases of violence against women and children, some have also created cybercrime police units to address the sexual exploitation of children that is linked with use of the Internet. In some contexts, the general public has been encouraged to report incidents of violence against children, in particular sexual exploitation, using hotlines and websites.

406. Efforts have also been made to provide child victims of violence with a range of advice, treatment and other support services, for example hotlines, crisis centres, medical support and shelters. Specialized services are in place in a number of countries for girls who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, including help lines, accommodation and reinsertion programmes. Other examples include a girl-to-girl mentoring programme for girls in distressed situations, anonymous online advice and school-based advisers for girls threatened by forced marriage, medical support for victims of female genital mutilation and accommodation for girls fleeing their families for fear of forced marriage.

Stronger partnerships between different stakeholders

407. The promotion of children's and girls' rights, and their protection from violence, is increasingly strengthened through collaboration and partnerships among different stakeholders, such as line ministries and public agencies, regional and local authorities, the judiciary, non-governmental organizations, men's groups, parents' associations, local leaders, the private sector, trade unions, academics and the media. These efforts are resulting in more integrated, multidisciplinary approaches to protect the rights and meet the needs of children and enhance attention to the specific situation of girls.

408. In some countries, collaboration between different line ministries and other governmental agencies and bodies has resulted in improved and accelerated policy development. For example, dialogue between civil society and government officials facilitated the elaboration of protection laws for children that included gender perspectives. Other stakeholders, including academics and judges, also helped to draft the legislation.

409. A variety of new partnerships among different stakeholders have positively affected the implementation of laws and policies. In one instance, representatives from government, the private sector, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and religious groups worked together on a commission for the eradication of child labour, while in another example, various public bodies, including schools, immigration authorities and health and social services, collaborated in the implementation of action plans to combat forced marriage. Stakeholders at the local level worked together to end harmful practices. In one example, village committees brought together Government officials and local leaders, including activists, teachers, religious leaders and traditional circumcisers, to ensure the compliance of communities with laws prohibiting female genital mutilation/cutting. Other examples of partnerships at the local level include a network of mayors-defenders of children, community committees to prevent trafficking in children and mothers' clubs to improve girls' education.

410. Collaboration between different stakeholders is critical for effective awareness-raising and service delivery. Increasingly, campaigns to prevent particular forms of violence against girls are undertaken in partnership by public and non-governmental actors, including men's organizations, religious leaders and the media. In many countries, non-governmental organizations, in partnership with the State, play a leading role in providing advice and support services for girls who are victims of different forms of violence and abuse. Collaborative efforts are also in place to provide counselling to girls on health-related issues.

411. Partnerships among different stakeholders have resulted in increased opportunities for children, and especially girls, to participate and have a voice in public life. Children have been supported to establish children's councils, youth parliaments, and be active in municipal councils. While such efforts aim to reach children as a group, girls actively participate in these structures and, in some countries, account for the majority of child parliamentarians. Peer education programmes, for example on HIV/AIDS prevention, have provided opportunities for children and girls to take on leadership roles.

Fostering a non-discriminatory culture

412. The persistence of attitudes and expectations based on stereotypes and traditional gender roles continues to reinforce existing gender inequalities and negatively affects girls' rights, self-esteem and opportunities. In recent years, Member States and other stakeholders have fostered the changing of attitudes, primarily by targeting the education sector, but also through initiatives aimed at the general public. Examples included developing strategies to address values and norms that have a negative impact on women and girls, raising awareness of opinion leaders and the general public about negative stereotypes against girls and improving tolerance and non-discriminatory attitudes towards particular groups of girls. Gender role stereotyping within the family has also been addressed, including through the dissemination of materials that encourage the equal sharing of responsibilities, and the promotion of boys' involvement in family life.

413. Important measures have been taken to address gender stereotypes in and through the educational system. States have continued to revise school curricula and manuals to remove gender biases, including in textbook images; and to sensitize students by integrating discussion of girls' and women's rights into courses and educational materials. Teacher training increasingly covers gender equality and gender-sensitive pedagogy. As social norms are learned at a very young age, some initiatives have promoted gender equality by teaching about gender roles in preschool, for example by developing and using children's stories that challenged gender roles.

414. Increasing efforts are being made to eliminate gender-biased expectations on girls' choices of fields of study and to widen their career choices. Steps have been taken to expand girls' participation in science and technology, for instance through math and science camps, mentoring programmes, opportunities to interact with female scientists and better information about employment opportunities in scientific careers. To address occupational segregation, women entrepreneurs served as role models for girls in schools, measures such as annual days to learn about non-traditional professions were organized, and broader use is being made of websites to disseminate relevant information. While some of these measures were originally designed for girls, in some countries they have been expanded to reach boys as well.

415. Increasing attention is being given to the role of sport in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality. Some countries developed programmes and promotional and educational materials to counteract the perception of sport as a male activity and to encourage girls to participate in sport. These efforts included producing a video highlighting the importance of physical activity in adolescence and featuring images of female athletes in official communication material on sport.

3. Gaps and challenges

416. A gender-neutral approach to children's rights continues and, in many cases, the commitment to addressing the situation of girls is not made explicit, despite the recent attention to the issue in the Commission on the Status of Women. With the exception of education, there has been a notable decrease in the number of States that provided information about this critical area of concern in their replies to the country questionnaire for the 15-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. While almost all States addressed

this issue for the 2005 review, only about half of them did so for the current review, with some covering children generally.

417. The girl child does not yet receive sufficiently explicit attention in policy and programme development and resource allocation. Measures aimed at children insufficiently respond to the situation of girls. Girls have little opportunity to participate in the development of public policy. While it remains a challenge for both girls and boys to exercise their right to be heard, girls' lower status further reinforces their invisibility in public life.[111]

418. A number of factors aggravate girls' vulnerability to discrimination, including poverty and the persistence of gender stereotypes. Girls who live in rural areas, have a disability or belong to an ethnic minority face additional disadvantages. Adolescents and girls living in conflict or post-conflict situations are particularly at risk for discrimination and violence. Attention to these factors remains insufficient. Increased research and data collection on the situation of girls is needed, including to assess and monitor the impact of measures taken.

419. Girls remain particularly vulnerable to different forms of violence, including in the home, the community and educational institutions.[112] WHO estimated that 150 million girls, compared with 73 million boys, were subjected to forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence.[110] Girls have also been shown to account for a greater percentage of trafficked victims than boys.[113] Sexual and gender-based violence that occurs in educational settings is mostly directed against girls by male teachers and classmates.[114] Over 2 million girls are at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation/cutting each year, and subnational data indicate only a slow decline in prevalence rates in some countries. Limited data are available on forced marriage, and combating this phenomenon remains a challenge.

420. Girls continue to have insufficient access to health services and information, including sexual and reproductive health. The adolescent birth rate remains high in parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, with dramatic consequences, as girls are more likely than adult women to die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth.[20] Early pregnancy, coupled with inadequate health services, results in devastating injuries such as obstetric fistula. In sub-Saharan Africa, women aged 15 to 24 are almost three times as likely as their male counterparts to be living with HIV, yet only one in four has comprehensive and correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS.[115]

421. Girls also continue to face significant barriers in access to education, including as a result of gender stereotypes that lead to greater attention to the education of boys than girls, and the allocation of domestic work and caregiving responsibilities activities primarily to girls. Resource constraints of poor families also constitute an important barrier to the education of girls.

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[111] See A/64/315.

[112] See E/CN.6/2007/2.

[113] See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2009* (UNODC, Vienna, 2009).

[114] See A/61/122, Add.1 and Corr.1.

[115] See United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic* (United Nations, Geneva, 2009); see also United Nations, *Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*, Statistical Annex: Millennium Development Goals, Targets and Indicators, 2009.

422. Many girls continue to face the hardships and risks associated with child labour. While agriculture accounts for a large share of both girls' and boys' employment, girls form the vast majority of domestic workers and are often exposed to long working hours, neglect of their rights, for example to education, and abusive treatment.[116]

III. Linkages between implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

A. Introduction

423. Following the adoption of the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit in 2000, eight Millennium Development Goals were established. The Goals are a sub-set of the goals and commitments of the United Nations global conferences and summits of the 1990s, which provided comprehensive frameworks for action in the areas they cover. Together with their time-bound and measurable targets, the Millennium Development Goals present valuable and effective benchmarks for monitoring progress and achieving concrete results.

424. It is increasingly recognized that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is essential for the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals, and efforts are made to incorporate gender perspectives in the implementation of all goals at the global, regional and national levels. In the declaration adopted at the 10-year review and appraisal in the Commission on the Status of Women in 2005, Member States emphasized that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

425. The global normative and policy framework on gender equality and the empowerment of women is contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as subsequent intergovernmental outcomes, such as resolutions of the General Assembly and agreed conclusions of the Commission. The Millennium Development Goals represent an opportunity for increasing the focus on national-level implementation of the Platform for Action, and — through the specific targets and indicators established — for measuring progress and outcomes. It is also increasingly recognized that the implementation of the Platform for Action is essential for the achievement of all the Goals.

426. The global framework on gender equality and empowerment of women — the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women — provides comprehensive guidance for effectively mainstreaming gender perspectives in all areas covered by the Millennium Development Goals.

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[116] See International Labour Organization, 2008b.

B. Linkages between implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

427. While important advances have been made globally, progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals is currently falling short of expectations. Multiple global crises, including the economic and financial crisis, the food and energy crises and the challenge of climate change, have led to significant setbacks for several goals, including those relating to poverty and hunger, health and decent work. Progress for women and girls in many areas covered by the Millennium Development Goals lags behind overall gains. This outcome is indicative of the insufficient attention given to the gender equality dimensions in national development policies and strategies related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

428. The diagnosis and strategic objectives and actions outlined in many of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action are instrumental for clarifying the gender perspectives in the Millennium Development Goals, as well as for addressing the gender-specific constraints and challenges faced by women and girls in efforts to achieve them.

429. This section illustrates the linkages between the Platform for Action and the gender equality dimensions of each Millennium Development Goal, presents the current status of progress for women, and points out gender-specific causes of lack of progress, as applicable. Opportunities for accelerating gender-sensitive progress on the Millennium Development Goals, using the guidance set out in the Platform, are also indicated.

Eradicate poverty and hunger

430. The Platform for Action recognizes that poverty is a complex and multidimensional problem and highlights the fact that women, especially in developing countries, are disproportionately affected by poverty. It notes that macro- and microeconomic policies and programmes have not always been designed to take gender perspectives into account, including their impact on women living in poverty. In the context of efforts to eradicate poverty and foster economic growth and development, the Platform provides strategic objectives and actions that seek to remove gender inequalities from economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources, employment, markets and trade. It highlights a range of measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in their access to, and opportunities in, employment.

431. These actions and measures are central for the achievement of Goal 1, which aims to eradicate poverty and hunger, with three targets: halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 a day; achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Progress is monitored through nine indicators: the proportion of population below $1 (purchasing power parity) per day; poverty gap ratio; share of poorest quintile in national consumption; growth rate of GDP per person employed; employment-to-population ratio; proportion of employed people living below $1

family workers in total employment; prevalence of underweight children under five years of age; and proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption.

432. While the Millennium Development Goals target of reducing poverty could be achieved overall, some regions will fall short and as many as 1 billion people are likely to remain in extreme poverty by 2015.[20] Figures disaggregated by sex are not readily available. Data on consumption expenditure and income collected at the household level, however, reveal that women and girls tend to be disproportionately represented among the poor. Some female-headed households are among the poorest and most disadvantaged of all households. In such households, women and/or girls assume primary responsibility for both productive and reproductive work and face constraints in accessing economic and financial resources.[117]

433. The recent combination of higher domestic food prices, lower incomes and unemployment has substantially increased food insecurity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that around 1.02 billion people in the world are hungry in 2009, which is the highest number since 1970. Women are more likely to be undernourished than men in many countries, as they have less access to food within the household, especially when it is scarce.[118]

434. As indicated in section II of the present report, access to labour markets and to decent work remains particularly limited for women,[57] and women are disproportionately represented in informal work and concentrated among lower-quality jobs within self-employment.[119] At the global level, the share of vulnerable employment in total female employment was 52.7 per cent in 2007, compared with 49.1 per cent for men. There has been no significant increase in the sharing of unpaid work, including caregiving, between women and men, which affects women's employment choices and other opportunities.[120]

Achieving universal primary education

435. The Platform for Action reaffirms that education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. It notes that literacy is important for improving health, nutrition and education in the family and empowering women to participate in decision-making. The Platform outlines a number of strategic objectives and actions that seek to ensure women's and girls' equal access to, and opportunities in education. It recommends measures to eliminate discrimination against girls in education, provide skills development and training, and ensure that the content and delivery of education and training are non-discriminatory and contribute to the promotion of gender equality.

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[117] See United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the impact of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Geneva, November 2009).

[118] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* (FAO, Rome, 2009).

[119] See International Labour Organization, *Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges* (ILO, Geneva, 2007).

[120] See United Nations, *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's Control over*

436. The Platform offers a comprehensive approach for accelerating achievement of Goal 2, which aims to achieve universal primary education, with the target of ensuring that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Progress is monitored through three indicators measuring the net enrolment ratio in primary education, the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary and the literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men.

437. Globally, progress is being made towards achieving universal primary education for all children. During the past decade, for example, school infrastructure and facilities have been expanded significantly in most of the developing world. However, more than 10 per cent of children of primary-school age are out of school, millions of children start school but eventually drop out,[20] and global figures mask disparities between and within regions and countries.

438. Girls gained both greater access to and participation in primary education. The ratio of girl to boy first-graders increased globally from 92 girls per 100 boys in 1999 to 95 girls per 100 boys in 2006, and nearly two thirds of the 187 countries for which data was available had achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment by 2006.[20]

439. At the same time, disparities persist. Girls who live in poverty, in rural areas or in urban slums, or who belong to a minority group, as well as girls with disabilities, are less likely to be enrolled. Existing evidence indicates that out-of-school girls are more likely than boys to never enrol in school.[20] In many developing countries, school systems are underfinanced and under-resourced and often fail to deliver a high quality education. As a result, many girls and boys leave school without having acquired the most basic literacy and numeracy skills.[20]

440. Limited progress has been made on the literacy indicator and the sex ratio of illiterate adults has not changed over the past 20 years. Women continue to account for nearly two thirds of illiterate adults in the world (see sect. II).[26]

Promote gender equality and empower women

441. Through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Platform for Action, Member States have set global standards for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Platform sets out strategic objectives and actions towards the practical realization of equality between women and men, including, inter alia, the elimination of de jure and de facto discrimination; the adoption, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes in all areas of public and private life; and the provision of services and support to women. It highlights the need for collection, dissemination and use of sex-disaggregated data and information and gender-specific research to support planning and evaluation of public policies.

442. This framework should guide work on Goal 3, which aims to promote gender equality and empower women, with the single target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. Progress is monitored through three indicators measuring ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

443. Progress towards this goal, as measured by the three indicators, has been limited. The early target date of 2005 for eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education was not met. Estimates for 2006 show that, worldwide, there were as many countries with more girls enrolled in secondary school as countries with more boys enrolled; however, global-level data hide differences between and within regions and countries.[26] The total number of girls who enrol in and complete secondary and tertiary education remains low in many parts of the world.

444. A gender division of labour persists, as reflected in the disproportionate concentration of women in vulnerable forms of work; occupational segregation and wage gaps; and the unequal division of unpaid domestic labour. While women have continued to move out of the agricultural sector in all regions of the world, 2007 estimates suggest that, overall, women are still overrepresented in that sector. In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the agricultural sector makes up more than 60 per cent of all women's employment.[20]

445. Progress on the third indicator has been very modest. As of November 2009, women held 18.8 per cent of seats in single/lower chambers of parliament globally,[62] compared to 11.3 per cent in 1995. The 2009 figure remains well below the 30 per cent target set in the 1990s.[121] Gains are not spread evenly across regions and regional aggregates mask the large number of countries where women have little presence in national decision-making.

Reduce child mortality

446. The Platform for Action provides a comprehensive assessment of the specific disadvantages faced by girls and outlines strategic objectives and actions to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls, including with regard to practices and conditions that contribute to child mortality. It highlights circumstances that have an impact on child mortality, emphasizing, for example, the importance of eliminating discrimination against girls in food allocation, nutrition and access to health services, and addresses early pregnancy as a cause of higher levels of maternal and child morbidity and mortality. It suggests various actions that could contribute to reducing child mortality, particularly among girls, including eliminating negative sociocultural attitudes and practices against girls and discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.

447. The Platform's assessment and actions can significantly enhance progress for girls in regard to Goal 4, which aims to reduce child mortality with the target of reducing by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate. Progress is measured through three indicators: under-five mortality rate; infant mortality rate; and proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles.

448. While under-five mortality declined worldwide from 93 to 67 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2007, many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, have made little or no progress on this indicator.[20] Although no global sex-disaggregated data are available, evidence indicates that discrimination against girls and unequal sharing of food and resources within households have a significant impact on girls' mortality. Improving women's health

[121] See Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, para. 7, recommendation VI.

and enhancing reproductive and maternal health and services (Goal 5) will directly contribute to attaining Goal 4.[122]

449. Considerable progress has been achieved across the developing world in controlling several major diseases, including measles, and in reducing child mortality, particularly during the post-neonatal period. Disparities continue to exist within and between developing countries, however. Reducing neonatal deaths requires the provision not only of appropriate care before, during and after birth, but also of adequate nutrition and health care for women and girls from birth through childhood and into adolescence and their potential childbearing years.[122]

Improve maternal health

450. The Platform for Action confirms women's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as well as their right to appropriate health-care services to enable them to experience safe pregnancy and childbirth. It notes particular risks and vulnerabilities related to women's sexual and reproductive health, including those linked to lack, or inadequacy, of health services and information, discriminatory attitudes and practices towards women and girls and women's limited decision-making roles. The Platform's strategic objectives and actions seek to increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services. It highlights a range of measures to enhance women's sexual and reproductive health, including in relation to family planning, maternal and emergency obstetric care and the accessibility of such care through the primary health-care system, as well as measures to address the health impact of unsafe abortions. It outlines measures to strengthen preventive programmes in the area of sexual and reproductive health, allocation of resources and monitoring.

451. The Platform provides a strong foundation for achieving Goal 5, which aims to improve maternal health, with two targets: reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio; and achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health. Progress is measured through six indicators: maternal mortality ratio; proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel; contraceptive prevalence rate; adolescent birth rate; antenatal care coverage; and unmet need for family planning.

452. Progress towards achieving Goal 5 lags behind all other goals. Every year, over 500,000 women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the six weeks following delivery, the majority in developing countries. Pregnancy early in life contributes to the estimated 70,000 maternal deaths among girls aged 15 to 19 every year.[20] Most maternal deaths are related to obstetric complications and complications from unsafe abortion that can be readily addressed by skilled health personnel and through the availability of key drugs, equipment and referral facilities, as well as access to maternal health services, including emergency obstetric and newborn care.[31] Overall, the proportion of births attended by skilled health workers in developing regions increased from 53 per cent in 1990 to 61 per cent in 2007. However, in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, more than half of all births still take place without the assistance of trained personnel.[20]

453. Additional underlying factors contributing to high maternal mortality rates include lack of education and knowledge, inadequate maternal and newborn health practices and care-seeking, insufficient access to nutritious food and essential micronutrients, poor environmental health facilities and inadequate basic health-care services. Poverty, social exclusion and gender-based discrimination underpin both the direct and underlying causes of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity.[17] While access to contraception has expanded globally, the unmet need remains high, especially in countries with the highest fertility.[20]

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

454. The Platform for Action acknowledges that women are affected by many of the same health conditions as men, but notes that they experience these conditions differently. The Platform draws attention to the particularly devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on women's health, especially the health of adolescent girls and young women, and its impact on women as caregivers. It draws attention to the link between violence against women and women's increased risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Strategic objectives and actions to strengthen prevention, as well as initiatives to address sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, are outlined. Measures set out in the Platform aim to empower women to protect themselves against infection, to participate in decision-making on policies and programmes in this area and to access care and support services.

455. Goal 6 aims to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, with three targets: have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS; achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it; and have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. Progress is measured through 10 indicators, including on HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years; condom use at last high-risk sex; HIV/AIDS knowledge; ratio of school attendance of orphans to non-orphans aged 10-14 years; the proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs, as well as indicators to measure reduction in malaria and tuberculosis.

456. The number of people newly infected with HIV peaked in 1996 and has since declined, to 2.7 million in 2007.[20] However, 33 million people worldwide still live with HIV/AIDS. Globally, about half of all people living with HIV are women, with variations within regions, countries and communities. In low- and middle-income countries, rates range from a low of 31 per cent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to approximately 60 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. Young people generally, and girls in particular, are increasingly vulnerable to HIV, with approximately 45 per cent of all new infections occurring among those aged 15-24 years.[123] Throughout the world, women's susceptibility to HIV infection is shaped by a complex interaction between socio-economic and sociocultural relations, as well as biological factors associated with sexual transmission of HIV, and many women and girls lack the social and economic power to control sexual and reproductive decision-making.

457. Access to antiretroviral treatment in poorer countries has increased significantly since the early 1980s, resulting in the first decline in the number of

AIDS deaths since the epidemic was recognized. By December 2007, 3 million people in the developing regions had access to antiretroviral drugs, a 47 per cent increase since December 2006. Globally, women have equal or greater access to antiretroviral drugs than men. In 2007, about 33 per cent of pregnant women who tested positive for HIV received antiretroviral treatment to prevent transmission of the virus to their babies.[20] While tuberculosis co-infection is debilitating to both women and men, women face serious barriers to tuberculosis treatment and have higher tuberculosis mortality rates compared with men.[124]

458. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has drawn attention to the importance of care work, including the weaknesses and insufficiencies of public policies and institutions created to address the care needs created by the disease, as well as the gender division of labour in provision of care. It has been estimated that, globally, women and girls provide up to 90 per cent of the care needs generated by the illness.[125]

Environmental sustainability

459. The Platform for Action highlights women's role in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management. It draws attention to the potential disproportionate impact of environmental risks on women's health, and the impact of environmental degradation, in particular on rural and indigenous women whose livelihoods and daily subsistence depend directly on sustainable ecosystems. Strategic objectives and actions are outlined to strengthen women's participation in environmental decision-making at all levels and to integrate gender concerns and perspectives into policies and programmes for sustainable development. The need for adequate mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women is also raised.

460. The Platform provides opportunities for increased attention to gender equality perspectives in respect of Goal 7, which aims to ensure environmental sustainability and has four targets: integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss; halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and by 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. Progress is monitored through 10 indicators, including: the proportion of land area covered by forest; CO_2 emissions; the proportion of population using an improved drinking water source; the proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility; and the proportion of urban population living in slums.

461. While sex-disaggregated data for a number of these indicators are not available or are difficult to compile, there are significant gender perspectives in the causes and implications of the issues covered. Women are, for example, disproportionately vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation as they make up a large number of the poor in communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood. Women's limited access to resources and decision-making processes increases their vulnerability to climate change. In particular,

[124] See UNAIDS Action Framework: Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV (August 2009).

women in rural areas in developing countries have the major responsibility for household water supply and energy for cooking and heating, as well as for food security, and are negatively affected by drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation.[126]

462. Although the world is ahead of schedule in meeting the 2015 drinking water target, 884 million people worldwide still rely on unimproved water sources for their drinking, cooking, bathing and other domestic activities. An additional 1.4 billion people will require improved access to sanitation if the 2015 target is to be met.[20] Women and girls continue to bear the main responsibility for water and sanitation in both rural and urban areas in many parts of the world and are negatively impacted by unreliable provision.

Develop a global partnership for development

463. The Platform for Action emphasized that only a new era of international cooperation among Governments and peoples based on a spirit of partnership, inter alia, will enable the world to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It recognized the importance of mobilization of resources from all available funding mechanisms for implementation of global commitments, especially on gender equality. The need to find effective development-oriented and durable solutions to external debt was also emphasized. The Platform seeks to ensure that a gender-sensitive approach is taken in development cooperation and economic activities, including trade agreements, to avoid adverse impacts on women.

464. These expectations, as set out in the Platform for Action, should inform efforts towards the achievement of goal 8, which aims to develop a global partnership for development, with six targets pertaining to issues such as the trading and financial system; the special needs of the least developed, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; the debt problems of developing countries; access to essential drugs; and new technologies. Progress is monitored through 16 indicators, including those related to official development assistance, market access and debt sustainability. The gender equality dimensions of this goal include, inter alia, the availability of resources for the promotion of gender equality, access of women entrepreneurs to trade and markets, and the share of women users of new ICT. While sex-disaggregated data are rarely available, some examples of the gender equality implications of the targets are provided below.

465. Total aid remains well below the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.[20] Investment in gender equality and women's empowerment is vital for improving economic, social and political conditions in developing countries in the framework of sustainable development. Bilateral assistance to sectors focused on activities that had gender equality as a principal or significant objective between 2000 and 2005 was limited. Two thirds of the $5 billion allocated was directed to the social sectors, mainly health and education, and limited funds were allocated to promoting gender equality in areas such as agriculture, infrastructure or finance.[122]

466. The debt service ratios have declined, and by the end of March 2009, 35 of 41 eligible countries had qualified for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor

[126] See Commission on the Status of Women issues paper on the theme "Gender perspectives and

Countries Initiative.[20] Debt burdens can have negative impacts on women and girls if debt servicing leads to cuts in public spending in the areas of health and education, reduces access and increases caregiving burdens.[127] Debt cancellation can be beneficial to women if resources can be diverted to financing for gender equality and women's empowerment. Some countries, for example, have used debt relief to help fund education programmes on nutrition and family planning.[128]

467. Trade policies have gender implications because women and men have differential access to, and control over, resources and play distinct roles in the market economy and at the household level. Protecting and enhancing women's economic opportunities and rights should be a key element of equitable trade strategies, with gender analysis systematically used in the design and monitoring of trade agreements to prevent or offset negative consequences for women.[117]

IV. Accelerating gender-sensitive Millennium Development Goal performance

468. Fifteen years after the adoption of the Platform for Action, and with the target dates for the Millennium Development Goals fast approaching, it is opportune to reconsider and modify policies, strategies and actions to ensure a more equitable, gender-sensitive and sustainable pattern of growth and development. There is a need to create an enabling environment at all levels to ensure that women and girls can equally contribute to, and benefit from, development processes.

469. Gender equality perspectives are poorly reflected in the current formulation of many of the Millennium Development Goals and are not explicitly outlined in strategies and plans for implementation of the Goals. Reviews of Millennium Development Goal reports in 2003 and 2005 revealed that gender equality perspectives were not adequately mainstreamed into national reports.[129] The failure to address the links between the Platform and the Millennium Development Goals and their targets and indicators reduces opportunities for identifying and addressing potential causes of slow progress.

470. The lack of progress for women in relation to the Millennium Development Goals suggests that the global policy framework on gender equality and empowerment of women, in particular the Platform for Action, is still insufficiently used as a basis for policymaking and programming aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

471. Further work is needed to strengthen the understanding of the linkages between the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and to translate this awareness into concrete action for improved and accelerated performance on the Goals. Actions to ensure more gender-sensitive implementation of the Millennium Development Goals should build on the major trends in implementation of the Platform for Action at the national level outlined in this report.

[128] See Jubilee Debt Campaign, "Debt and Women", Briefing/07, London.

[129] See United Nations Development Fund for Women, *Making the Millennium Development Goals*

A. Participatory processes and strategic partnerships

472. Participation of a diverse range of stakeholders — both women and men — in the design, implementation and monitoring of strategies aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals should significantly increase opportunities for enhancing attention to the gender perspectives of the Goals and for channelling experiences and good practices in the implementation of the Platform for Action into policy development, implementation and monitoring of the Goals.

473. Increasingly, national mechanisms for gender equality participate in national Millennium Development Goal processes, including monitoring and reporting. Consultative processes involving women's groups and networks, and other civil society actors, contribute to the formation of strategic partnerships and collaboration across sectors. Such partnerships can support the establishment of links between existing policies, plans and strategies for implementation of the Platform for Action and those aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

B. Strengthened political commitment and leadership

474. Strengthened political commitment and leadership is required to explicitly articulate gender equality as a goal in all areas in the Millennium Development Goal framework. Greater priority must be given to gender equality and empowerment of women in policies, strategies, programmes and actions for implementation, monitoring and reporting on all Millennium Development Goals.

475. Gender equality and women's empowerment have been prioritized and included as principles in the development cooperation policies and programmes of a number of donor countries, as well as in the EU Agenda for Action on the Millennium Development Goals, adopted in 2008. Further efforts are needed to ensure that development cooperation provides support to the incorporation of gender equality perspectives in all areas of the Millennium Development Goal framework.

476. Efforts to mainstream gender equality perspectives in national Millennium Development Goal monitoring and reporting have intensified, in some cases with the assistance and support of international organizations.[129] Some countries, for example, have added gender-sensitive targets and indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals at the national level, including indicators on violence against women. Increasingly, countries are endeavouring to use available data disaggregated by sex to measure progress. Such efforts should be expanded and applied more systematically in all Millennium Development Goal monitoring and reporting processes.

C. Improved analysis, monitoring and reporting

477. In order to strengthen attention to the gender equality perspectives in all the Millennium Development Goals, and to develop and implement effective policies and strategies that respond to gender-specific challenges and constraints, there is a need to systematically collect and use sex-disaggregated data and to strengthen the effective use of gender analysis across all the Goals.

478. Increased gender-sensitive research and analysis needs to be generated, especially at the national level, to inform the work of policymakers and key stakeholders involved in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

D. Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women

479. Increased attention must be given to the way in which women and men can benefit from, and have access to, economic and financial resources. There is also a need to increase resources, both human and financial, to support the implementation of policies and programmes, as well as institutional mechanisms promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. To this end, gender equality perspectives must be fully integrated in all economic decision-making, including as they relate to public sector expenditures, private sector investments and official development assistance.

480. The need for improved tracking and monitoring of expenditures allocated for gender equality has been recognized. Gender-responsive budgeting has emerged as an effective tool in promoting change in budget policies, allocation and outcomes to ensure that resources are provided for the implementation of commitments on gender equality. Over the past decade, gender-responsive budgeting initiatives have been launched in more than 70 countries,[127] marking progress towards greater recognition of the gender-specific implications of fiscal policies.

481. The success of initiatives on financing for gender equality and empowerment of women is reliant on the active involvement and collaboration of a broad range of stakeholders, including ministries of finance and planning, national mechanisms for gender equality, parliamentarians, research bodies and women's organizations.

V. Priority areas for further action

482. To accelerate progress in implementation, strengthened efforts are needed to address persistent gaps and challenges and emerging obstacles, as well as to build on achievements, lessons learned and good practices in implementation in relation to all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action. A number of priority areas for further action were identified.

A. Actions across all critical areas of concern

Cross-cutting issues

483. In addition to specific gaps and challenges and areas needing action in each critical area of concern in the Platform for Action, a number of cross-cutting issues were raised in relation to all critical areas of concern.

484. Governments highlighted the importance of further action to identify and address gender stereotypes, which constrain progress in achieving the goals established in the Platform for Action. Combating stereotypes requires a range of strategies, such as curriculum revision and teacher training in the education sector; measures to combat attitudes that assign girls an inferior status and legitimize discrimination and violence against them; campaigns and training programmes to

dispel stereotypes on women's leadership roles; and awareness-raising campaigns for the general public and through educational programmes in schools on zero tolerance for violence against women.

485. Violence against women was consistently addressed as an obstacle to implementation in many areas and the need for significant further action across sectors, including health, education, employment and law enforcement, was highlighted. In the education sector, for example, strategies required include improving safety en route to schools and ensuring safe sanitary facilities in schools; and adopting measures to address impunity for sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations were highlighted.

486. Across all critical areas, the importance of increasing the participation of women in decision-making processes was emphasized, both as a right in itself and as a means to ensure the incorporation of gender perspectives and to facilitate positive outcomes in decision-making processes at all levels. Women's exclusion, for example, from economic decision-making and from the management of natural resources must be urgently addressed. Measures need to be identified to increase women's participation in political decision-making at all levels, including in political parties and parliaments. The absence of women holding decision-making positions in peace processes contributes to the limited attention to gender perspectives in peace agreements and the neglect of women's human rights. Reliable and comparable statistics are needed on women's access to decision-making in other areas such as academia, the judiciary and the media.

487. Many Governments explicitly recognized the critical role of men and boys in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The need to strengthen their involvement was raised, in particular in the context of combating violence against women; ensuring women's human rights; creating a non-discriminatory environment for girls; and increasing women's participation in decision-making. Measures required include information and awareness-raising campaigns, inclusion of gender equality in education curricula and materials and development of positive male role models for boys and youth.

488. There is emerging recognition that the unequal distribution of unpaid work between women and men is a major obstacle to gender equality, limiting progress across critical areas of concern, in particular in education, employment and participation in public life.

Common strategies across critical areas of concern

489. A number of key findings were made in relation to common strategies utilized to support implementation across critical areas of concern.

490. Comprehensive legal frameworks, which provide specific legislation on gender equality and ensure attention to gender equality perspectives in all other legislation, were recognized as a critical foundation for implementation in all areas. The need for legislation to both prevent and respond to gender discrimination and inequality was acknowledged. Increasingly, action was taken on awareness of the critical importance of enforcement of legislation. Measures required to ensure effective implementation include broad dissemination of legislation, awareness-raising for women themselves and other key stakeholders, training for all relevant officials involved in implementation, funding and effective monitoring and reporting.

491. The adoption of comprehensive national policies and action plans on gender equality is an important element in the implementation of all critical areas of concern. The effectiveness of such instruments is dependent on the incorporation of measurable goals, targets and timetables; establishment of monitoring and accountability mechanisms, including for impact assessments; costing of implementation and provision of necessary funding for implementation; and clear designation of roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. Responses from Governments also pointed to the importance of targeted strategies and/or action plans on specific areas. The contribution of such plans was particularly clear, for example, in relation to addressing violence against women and in implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

492. Particular attention was focused in all areas on the need to strengthen implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy to ensure that the needs and priorities of women and girls are systematically and effectively taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, plans and resource allocations across all policy areas. Actions highlighted included strengthened political will and visible leadership, enhanced capacity-building at all levels, increased allocation of specific resources for the implementation of the strategy and further development of practical methodologies and tools. Gender perspectives should be fully incorporated into critical national instruments, such as national development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, Millennium Development Goals reports and strategies and plans on sustainable development.

493 The importance of addressing the gap between policy and normative development and its translation into concrete action was recognized. Improvements in monitoring and reporting on progress and impacts are needed in all areas. In cases where Governments reported on general measures taken without specifying efforts made to ensure a gender-sensitive approach, for example on poverty eradication, health or environmental sustainability, it is critical to systematically monitor progress and impacts from a gender perspective.

494. It was recognized that accelerated implementation of all critical areas of concern — including, for example, poverty, violence against women, women's human rights and the girl child — requires a multisectoral approach, with strong cooperation and coordination across all relevant sectors.

495. The limited availability of reliable, comparable statistics was raised as a significant obstacle to accelerated implementation in all critical areas of concern. Improvement of statistics is crucial to allow policymakers to undertake effective legislative and policy reforms, ensure development of relevant strategies and actions, monitor trends and progress and assess the impact of measures taken. Measures are needed to improve the collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and use of data disaggregated by sex and age, and to further develop quantitative and qualitative indicators to increase capacity to assess progress on elimination of discrimination in all areas. The further development of methodologies and tools for improving data collection and dissemination on women's representation in decision-making positions across all sectors, for example, is one area where urgent attention is needed. The capacity of national statistics offices to measure gender-specific access to economic and financial resources and to undertake time-use surveys is also important in accelerating implementation of the critical areas of concern regarding

poverty and the economy. Increased data on women's access to, and use of, new ICT is another important priority.

496. Despite progress made, further research is needed in many areas. Priority areas identified included research on barriers to women's access to decision-making and the positive impact of women's increased participation in decision-making; the access of women and girls to ICT; and the specific needs and priorities of vulnerable groups of women, such as migrant women, older women and women with disabilities, in relation to many of the critical areas of concern.

497. The value of continuing or strengthening a life cycle approach was evident in many areas, including in relation to health, education, employment, poverty and the situation of the girl child. Greater attention needs to be given, for example, to the impact of life cycle factors — such as women's interrupted employment histories because of unequal responsibilities for caregiving — on efforts to promote access to employment and social welfare programmes, in particular unemployment benefits, health insurance and pensions.

498. The importance of awareness-raising was highlighted by Governments across many critical areas of concern. Information campaigns are needed to facilitate public awareness; empower women through knowledge of their rights and increase their capacity to claim them; and strengthen societal condemnation of discrimination and inequality in all areas. The importance of awareness-raising initiatives in areas such as violence against women, women's human rights, the girl child, and women's role in decision-making was highlighted as a means to end societal tolerance of, and complicity in, discrimination and inequality for women and girls.

499. Governments also noted the effective use of the education system to raise awareness of important issues and combat gender stereotypes. The education system has particular potential for changing attitudes in areas such as violence against women, human rights of women, the role of men and boys, access to ICT, and the situation of the girl child.

Institutional development

500. Considerable attention in responses was given to the challenges and required action in relation to institutional development in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across the critical areas of concern.

501. Strengthening political will and leadership is a critically important priority action. Leadership at all levels — local, national, regional and international — and across all sectors is critical for generating sustained action in support of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

502. A number of Governments called attention to the importance of increasing the involvement of national mechanisms for gender equality across all sectors. The need to significantly increase capacity and resources in these mechanisms to allow them to play a strengthened role must be addressed, however.

503. The value of a broad range of partnerships and the active involvement of, and collaboration with, all relevant stakeholders for effective and sustained implementation of the critical areas of concern was acknowledged. In particular, a number of Governments highlighted the importance of partnerships with

non-governmental organizations. The potential for increasing the involvement of the private sector in relevant areas should also be utilized.

504. The importance of capacity development for a range of stakeholders was highlighted in all critical areas of concern. The effectiveness of targeting capacity development to the needs of particular groups of actors was noted, such as teachers, media professionals, health professionals and law enforcement officials.

505. Increasing resource allocations for the promotion of gender equality in general, and the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy in particular, must be a priority. The crucial role of development assistance for supporting the acceleration of implementation was noted in many critical areas of concern. Gender-responsive budgeting was highlighted as an effective strategy for increasing coherence between policy commitments and resource allocations and for strengthening transparency and accountability.

506. Many Governments raised the issue of the potential impact of the current economic and financial crisis on efforts to accelerate implementation of the critical areas of concern. Action must be taken to avoid negative impacts, such as the withdrawal of girls from school, women's increased involvement in precarious forms of labour to compensate for loss of family income, and an increase in women's unpaid work to compensate for reduced basic services. The impact of the economic and financial crisis on women should be taken into account in economic policies and programmes at all levels. Stimulus packages in response to the financial crisis should include gender-sensitive investments both in physical and social infrastructure and in employment generation, which take into account both paid and unpaid work.

B. Strategies and actions on specific critical areas of concern

507. In addition to the cross-cutting issues discussed above, specific priority areas for further action were identified for each of the 12 critical areas of concern. Gaps and challenges in relation to each of the critical areas of concern have already been outlined in section II of the present report. The following section highlights some of the priority areas for further action under each area.

Women and poverty

508. Inequality and discrimination in access to resources has implications for the well-being of women, their families and communities, as well as for economic growth and development. Priority must be given to identifying and addressing women's unequal access to economic and financial resources, including employment, social security and productive resources such as land, property and natural resources.

509. The constraints faced by women in accessing formal financial services, including savings, credit, insurance and money transfer services, should be explicitly addressed. Particular attention needs to be given to the obstacles faced by poor women in accessing microfinancing.

510. Women's access to social protection schemes, including unemployment benefits, health insurance and pension schemes, should be increased throughout the life cycle. Social security systems must take into account women's employment

histories and recognize leave periods for caregiving in the calculation of benefits. Efforts are needed to strengthen and expand social protection to meet the needs of women living in poverty, taking into account the impact of the unequal sharing of unpaid work.

511. Legislation and policies should be adopted/reviewed to ensure women's equal access to, and control over, land and property, including through inheritance and land reform programmes. Measures are needed to address the discriminatory elements of customary law in relation to land and property rights and to build on gender-sensitive and progressive aspects. The judicial system must be more accessible and responsive to women, and provide legal aid to women seeking to claim their rights.

512. Gender perspectives must be fully incorporated into poverty reduction strategies and related actions. Monitoring and evaluation processes should consistently address the extent to which policies, programmes and activities effectively address the needs, priorities and contributions of women and men.

Education and training of women

513. Targeted interventions are needed to address continuing inequality in access and achievement at all education levels, in particular to narrow disadvantages caused by factors such as poverty, geographic location, language, ethnicity and disability. Good practices in measures that can be more widely replicated to increase the enrolment of girls include the provision of school feeding programmes and financial incentives such as scholarships.

514. Greater efforts are needed to improve the safety of girls at and on the way to school, including by providing infrastructure such as separate toilets and improved lighting, conducting awareness-raising initiatives in schools and communities and establishing and enforcing sanctions for violence against girls.

515. Measures to promote non-discriminatory education and broader career choices, including through curriculum revision, teacher training, and encouragement and support for girls to participate in science and technology, should be scaled up.

516. Efforts are needed to ensure that the educational achievements of women and girls translate into employment opportunities. This requires a better understanding of the political, economic and social factors that impact the school-to-work transition for girls and boys in different regions.

517. Illiteracy remains a serious constraint for many women. Greater attention must be given to ensuring access to education across the life cycle. The potential of ICT should be harnessed to increase access to adult education and vocational training.

Women and health

518. Further measures, including increased resources, are needed to ensure affordable and accessible quality health services for women, including primary health care and reproductive health services.

519. Particular attention should be given to the health priorities and needs of vulnerable groups of women, such as those living with HIV/AIDS, women with disabilities, older women, women in poverty and women in remote and rural areas.

520. Given the slow progress on achievement of goal 5 on maternal health, there is an urgent need to significantly increase attention and resources in this area, including through improved access to reproductive health services and access to skilled care during pregnancy, delivery and after birth, as well as access to emergency services in the event of life-threatening complications.

521. Increased attention should be focused on the needs and priorities of women as caregivers, in both formal and informal contexts, and in particular in the context of HIV/AIDS.

522. There is an urgent need to strengthen health systems to make them more responsive to women's health needs, including in terms of access and comprehensiveness. Particular efforts are needed to expand health services for women related to mental health, violence against women and non-communicable diseases.

Violence against women

523. In addition to establishing provisions for penalizing and punishing perpetrators, legislative frameworks on violence against women should mandate support and protection for victims/survivors, prevention measures, training for relevant officials, funding and the creation of mechanisms to monitor implementation.

524. Persistent impunity for violence against women requires urgent action to ensure increased reporting, prosecution and sentencing. A range of measures is required, including awareness-raising, training for law enforcement officials and gender-sensitive processes and procedures, with due attention to the security of victims/survivors of violence.

525. Victims/survivors of violence should have access to adequate and coordinated services. The provision of services, including counselling, shelter and medical and legal services in one location has proven to be a promising practice which can be effectively replicated across regions. Extension of services to rural and remote areas needs further attention.

526. Effective advocacy campaigns are critical for increasing public awareness of the unacceptability of violence against women and girls. Such campaigns should also extend to rural areas. Educational curricula at all levels should promote gender equality and women's human rights and condemn violence against women.

527. Effective use should be made, at national and local levels, of the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to end violence against women, 2008-2015" to significantly increase momentum. The campaign calls for action in five main areas: adoption and enforcement of legislation, adoption and implementation of multisectoral action plans, data collection and analysis, national and/or local campaigns and systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations.

Women and armed conflict

528. Stronger action is needed to address gaps and challenges in women's full and equal participation at all levels of policy- and decision-making, including as mediators and negotiators, and to systematically consult women's groups and networks, in peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding.

529. Strengthened and coordinated action should address all forms of violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, including sexual violence. An urgent priority is to end impunity, including through the effective implementation of Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009). Increased resources are needed to provide adequate assistance and redress to survivors of sexual violence and other human rights abuses.

530. Women's political, social and economic empowerment in post-conflict settings must be given increased priority. The window of opportunity for positive change in governance structures, rule of law and infrastructure development must be used more effectively to eliminate inequalities and discrimination in law and in practice and guarantee equal access to resources and opportunities.

531. Women's access to the resources and opportunities available through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should be increased, supported by measures to strengthen data availability on women associated with armed forces and groups.

532. The 10-year anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) provides an important opportunity to create new momentum and accelerate action on women, peace and security, including through measures to increase the participation of women, address violence against women, increase gender responsiveness in post-conflict reconstruction, improve data availability and enhance accountability for implementation.

Women and the economy

533. Efforts are needed to ensure women's equal access to full employment and decent work. Legislative and policy measures should address discrimination and inequalities such as horizontal and vertical occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. Specific measures are required to target the constraints women face through their disproportionate representation in the informal sector, including measures to ensure that work in the informal sector is covered by labour regulation and social protection.

534. Stronger measures are required to protect the rights of, and ensure decent work conditions for, domestic workers, including migrant women, in relation to working hours, conditions and wages, access to health-care services, and other social and economic benefits, as well as to eliminate sexual exploitation and violence.

535. Support to women entrepreneurs, and particularly to successful women entrepreneurs wishing to expand their businesses, should be increased, including through greater access to formal financial instruments, training and advisory services, access to markets and facilitation of networking and exchanges.

536. Increased efforts are needed to address the constraints to women's labour market participation posed by unequal sharing of unpaid work, including caregiving. Interventions should include provision of infrastructure and services, establishment of flexible working arrangements for both women and men and measures to encourage more equal sharing of unpaid household work between women and men.

537. The reconciliation of work and family responsibilities should be facilitated through increased flexibility in working arrangements, such as part-time work, and efforts to ensure that both women and men have access to maternity, paternity,

parental and other forms of leave, and are not discriminated against when availing themselves of such benefits.

Women in power and decision-making

538. Based on the wide recognition of the usefulness of quota provisions in the public sector and other areas, quota systems should be further strengthened and expanded. Their effective implementation requires the establishment and enforcement of sanctions for non-compliance.

539. Specific measures to encourage and support women to seek and gain political office and other senior leadership positions should be enhanced, including management and leadership training, formalized mentorship programmes and sustainable financial support.

540. Innovative strategies are needed to promote changes in organizational culture, rules of procedure and working methods of institutions such as parliaments, political parties and corporate boards to ensure gender-sensitive responses to the needs and interests of both women and men.

541. Obstacles to women's participation, such as stereotypes, low levels of education and training, limited access to financial resources and constraints related to lack of time, and lack of personal security, must be identified and addressed.

542. More systematic efforts are needed to address and overcome negative stereotypes about women's leadership potential. Measures need to be targeted at a variety of stakeholders, including the private sector, political parties, traditional and religious leaders, the educational system, media and the general public.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

543. Further efforts are needed to ensure that national mechanisms for gender equality have the necessary political support, a clear mandate, capacity to coordinate and collaborate with different stakeholders, and human and financial resources to implement their mandates consistently and effectively.

544. The potential of the increased diversity of national mechanisms for gender equality, including ministries, committees, focal points in line ministries, ombudspersons and networks in parliaments, should be fully utilized through development of effective collaboration and coordination mechanisms.

545. National gender equality policies and strategies, which provide the overall framework for a comprehensive approach to the promotion of gender equality, need to be reviewed and strengthened to ensure clear goals, targets, timelines and accountability and reporting mechanisms, and adequately resourced to ensure implementation.

546. National mechanisms for gender equality should continue to play a key role in advocating for, monitoring and supporting the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. Capacity development of staff at all levels of Government remains a key priority to ensure the necessary awareness, knowledge and skills to effectively mainstream gender perspectives in all sectors.

547. As critical users of statistics and indicators, national mechanisms for gender equality should strengthen their role in advocating for, and supporting further

developments in, this area. This requires enhanced collaboration with national statistics offices and statistical offices in line ministries, and support for capacity development in these institutions.

548. Collaboration with civil society, including non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, should continue to be strengthened at all levels.

Human rights of women

549. Discriminatory laws/provisions should be repealed and legal and policy reforms continued to ensure full compliance with States' international obligations, in particular those under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[9] Steps should be taken to ensure that provisions of multiple legal systems comply with international human rights standards, including the principle of non-discrimination.

550. Greater efforts are needed to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of non-discriminatory legal frameworks by public officials and other agents of the State, and to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise. Efforts to strengthen the capacity of State and non-State actors to comply with such laws must be sustained.

551. Measures to guarantee access to justice must be enhanced. Effective, affordable and accessible means of recourse and redress for violations of women's rights must be made available to all women, including through gender-responsive courts/tribunals.

552. Steps are needed to strengthen women's knowledge of their rights and legal literacy, as well as measures to empower women to effectively claim their rights, and targeted measures are necessary for women affected by multiple grounds of discrimination. Men and boys should be actively involved in legal literacy programmes focusing on human rights and women's rights.

553. Greater use must be made of temporary special measures as a necessary element in strategies to accelerate the practical realization of the principle of equality of women and men.

Women and the media

554. Enactment of legislation, as appropriate, as well as voluntary action or other self-regulatory mechanisms are essential to combat discrimination and gender stereotyping in the media. Exchange of good practice and lessons learned would enhance progress in this area.

555. Further emphasis is needed on education and training of journalists and other media professionals, including through gender equality modules in the curricula of media studies at all levels, to increase attention to gender equality issues in the media, provide a more balanced and realistic portrayal of women, including those in leadership positions, and reduce discriminatory and stereotypical coverage.

556. Significantly strengthened measures are needed to improve women's access to ICT, particularly in poor, rural areas. The specific constraints women face in utilizing public access centres need to be identified and addressed. Ways and means of increasing access to relevant content for women in rural areas need to be developed.

557. Actions to increase women's equitable access to employment in all areas of media and ICT, including at management levels, should be strengthened.

Women and the environment

558. In the context of climate change, measures to increase rural women's access to, and control over, natural resources, in particular land, water and energy sources, must become a priority area for action, and attention must also be given to improving women's access to the infrastructure, services and technologies necessary to effectively utilize these resources.

559. Women's active involvement in the management of natural resources, including through community-level user groups managing common pool resources, such as water and forests, must be assured.

560. Research on the gender perspectives of climate change needs to be further strengthened to effectively inform responses to climate change, including in relation to mitigation and adaptation activities, technological innovations and resource allocation.

The girl child

561. Ending discrimination and violence against the girl child requires comprehensive strategies that create an enabling and supportive environment for girls. This should include enhanced programmes and services for girls to ensure their equal rights, protection and opportunities, including in education, health and participation in public and community life.

562. There is an urgent need to improve the reproductive health of adolescent girls, including with regard to the prevention of HIV/AIDS and early pregnancy.

563. More attention should be focused on the importance of developing social networks for girls. Peer groups, girls clubs and mentorship programmes can help girls access information, develop communication skills and increase self-confidence, with important implications for their personal development. Such measures are particularly important for isolated girls, including out-of-school girls and domestic workers.

564. Greater momentum must be built to increase girls' participation in post-primary education. Education and training, both in secondary schools and in non-formal settings, should impart relevant knowledge and skills. Financial literacy and ICT skills are particularly important for girls' empowerment.

565. Increased efforts are necessary to tackle child labour, including forms of labour involving girls that are particularly disempowering and exploitative, such as domestic work. Urgent attention should be given to improving working conditions, ensuring access to social protection, and promoting and protecting their rights, including the right to education and leisure.

Annex

Regional distribution rates of responses to the questionnaire

Economic Commission for Africa	*Economic Commission for Europe*	*Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*	*Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*	*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*
Algeria	Albania	Argentina	Australia	Bahrain
Angola	Austria	Barbados	Brunei Darussalam	Egypt
Botswana	Azerbaijan	Belize	China	Jordan
Burkina Faso	Belarus	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Fiji	Kuwait
Burundi	Belgium	Brazil	Indonesia	Lebanon
Cameroon	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Chile	Islamic Republic of Iran	Oman
Cape Verde	Bulgaria	Colombia	Japan	Palestine
Chad	Canada	Costa Rica	Nauru	Qatar
Congo	Croatia	Cuba	New Zealand	Syrian Arab Republic
Côte d'Ivoire	Cyprus	Dominica	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates
Djibouti	Czech Republic	Dominican Republic	Philippines	Yemen
Equatorial Guinea	Denmark	Ecuador	Samoa	
Eritrea	Estonia	El Salvador	Singapore	
Ethiopia	Finland	Guatemala	Solomon Islands	
Gambia	France	Haiti	Thailand	
Guinea	Georgia	Honduras	Tonga	
Lesotho	Germany	Jamaica	Viet Nam	
Liberia	Greece	Mexico		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Hungary	Panama		
Mali	Iceland	Paraguay		
Mauritania	Ireland	Peru		
Mauritius	Israel	Suriname		
Morocco	Italy	Trinidad and Tobago		
Mozambique	Kazakhstan	Uruguay		
Namibia	Kyrgyzstan			
Nigeria	Latvia			
Rwanda	Lithuania			
Senegal	Luxembourg			
Seychelles	Malta			
South Africa	Republic of Moldova			
Sudan	Monaco			
Swaziland	Montenegro			
Togo	Netherlands			
Tunisia	Norway			
Uganda	Poland			
Zambia	Portugal			
Zimbabwe	Romania			

Economic Commission for Africa	*Economic Commission for Europe*	*Economic Commisstion for Latin America and the Caribbean*	*Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*	*Economic and Social Commisssion for Western Asia*
	Russian Federation			
	Serbia			
	Slovakia			
	Slovenia			
	Spain			
	Sweden			
	Switzerland			
	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia			
	Turkey			
	Tajikistan			
	Turkmenistan			
	Ukraine			
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland			
	Uzbekistan			
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